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Thimmakka laid to rest with full state honour

BENGALURU, 15 NOV

Environmentalist and Padma Shri awardee 'Saalumarada' Thimmakka was laid to rest with full state honours on Saturday, following her passing at the age of 114. Known as 'Vruksha Maate' (Mother of Trees), she gained fame for planting 385 banyan trees along a 4.5km stretch in Karnataka. Thimmakka started her environmental mission despite having no formal education, filling a void in her life as a childless woman. Home Minister G Parameshwara and Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre attended the last rites, praising her as a "devoted guardian of the environment." Khandre announced an award in her name and the planting of 114 saplings across Karnataka in her honour. *—PTI*

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India needs 30,000 new pilots for 1,700 aircrafts: Naidu

VISAKHAPATNAM, 15 NOV

Union Civil Aviation Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu announced on Saturday that India will require an additional 30,000 pilots as the country receives its pending orders for 1,700 aircraft. Currently, India has about 8,000 pilots, with many not actively flying. Naidu stated, "To run a plane, one aircraft in a proper schedule needs at least 10 to 15 pilots." He emphasised the need for more Flying Training Organisations to meet this demand and noted that each job in aviation creates 15 indirect jobs. The minister also highlighted plans for cargo airports and an ambitious goal of increasing domestic aerospace manufacturing from USD 2 billion to USD 4 billion by 2030. *—PTI*

AL FALAH VARSITY BOOKED

The metro station remained shut for nearly four days after the explosion near Delhi's Red Fort *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB*

Lal Quila Metro stn opened 4 days after Delhi blast

NEW DELHI, 15 NOV

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) on Saturday reopened two entry gates at Lal Quila Metro station, nearly four days after the powerful blast near the Red Fort led to tightened security and restricted access in the area.

In a post on X, the DMRC announced that Gate Nos. 2 and 3 were now operational, restoring partial commuter access suspended in the immediate aftermath of Monday evening's explosion. The blast had triggered a swift lockdown around the heritage precinct, with enhanced checks and movement curbs in place for several days as multiple agencies carried out investigations. The reopening is expected to ease pedestrian flow around the busy tourist and market zone.

Meanwhile, Delhi Police have registered two separate FIRs against Haryana's Al-Falah University for alleged cheating and forgery, following red flags raised by the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC). Officials said both bodies detected "major irregularities" during their review of the university's functioning, prompting the Crime Branch to initiate action over alleged false accreditation claims.

This comes even as the Special Cell continues probing the wider plot behind the Red Fort blast. A separate FIR under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act has already been transferred to the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

The university, located at Dhauj in Faridabad, had earlier come under scrutiny in connection with the ongoing terror module investigation.

A police team also visited its Okhla headquarters on Saturday and sought information regarding suspects linked to the case. *—PTI*

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9 dead as J&K blast ruled as accident

Seized chemicals explode during police check

SRINAGAR/NEW DELHI, 15 NOV

Nine people were killed and 32 injured after an "accidental" explosion ripped through the Nowgam police station in Srinagar late on Friday night. Senior officials in Srinagar and New Delhi stressed that the blast was not a terror attack but occurred while teams were handling a large cache of explosives seized in an ongoing Jaish-e-Mohammed-linked 'white-collar' terror module case.

Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat and MHA Joint Secretary (Kashmir) Prashant Lokhande issued near-identical statements, dismissing speculation of a terror strike. Both declined to take questions. Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has ordered a probe to determine the exact cause.

The explosion took place around 11.20 pm when a specialised team was extracting samples from a "voluminous" and "unstable" mix of explosive substances recovered earlier in Faridabad. The cache, around 360 kg of ammonium nitrate, potassium nitrate, sulphur, chemicals, and reagents, had been transported to Nowgam as the original case was registered there. Much of it was stored in an open area of the police station.

The nine killed included Naib Tehsildar Muzaffar Ahmed Khan, Suhail Ahmad Rather (Revenue Department), Inspector Israr Ahmad Shah of the State Investigation Agency, FSL officials, crime branch photographers, and Mohammad Shafi Parray, a tailor attached to the sampling team.

Thirty-two others, 27 police personnel, two revenue officials and three nearby civilians, were hospitalised. The blast severely damaged the police station and triggered small successive explosions that slowed rescue work.

Bereaved families mourn during a tribute ceremony for the Srinagar blast victims on Saturday *PHOTO: PTI*

> **I hope no such thing (Operation Sindoor) will happen. Nothing came out of it. Our 18 people died. Our borders were compromised. I hope both nations improve their relations. That is the only way**
> —Farooq Abdullah, J&K ex-CM

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said the government would compensate for damage to nearby structures and assured full support to the victims' families. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge called the incident a "wake-up call" for strengthening intelligence mechanisms and sought an all-party meeting on the "growing threat" of terrorism from external forces.

The explosives had been recovered on 9–10 November from the Faridabad residence of arrested accused Dr Muzzamil Ganaie. The seizure followed a trail that began with threatening posters in Nowgam. Subsequent arrests led investigators to Al Falah University, where Ganaie and Dr Shaheen Sayeed were detained. Police believe a core group of doctors, including Umar Nabi, the driver of the explosives-laden car that blew up near the Red Fort on 10 November, were running the module.

Inspector Israr Ahmad Shah, among the dead, is survived by his wife, two young children, and elderly parents. *—PTI*

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CM, DKS in Delhi; Renew buzz over Cabinet reshuffle

BENGALURU, 15 NOV

Political circles are closely watching Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar's visit to New Delhi amid renewed speculation over a Cabinet reshuffle in Karnataka. The two senior Congress leaders are in the capital to attend the launch of a book authored by former Union Minister Kapil Sibal.

According to party sources, Siddaramaiah met Rahul Gandhi and held discussions with him. A fortnight ago, the Chief Minister had said he was seeking an appointment with Gandhi to discuss the reshuffle during his Delhi trip. He had also stated that any decision would be taken after the Bihar Assembly elections.

Shivakumar's presence in Delhi has reignited chatter about a possible leadership change, despite Siddaramaiah's insistence that he will complete his full five-year term. Minister Zameer Ahmed Khan dismissed the speculation, saying there would be no "November Revolution", a phrase earlier used by Minister KN Rajanna while hinting at major changes in the government.

As talk of a reshuffle grows, lobbying has intensified among Congress legislators. Party sources said NA Harris, Rizwan Arshad, BK Hariprasad, Belur Gopalakrishna, HC Balakrishna, Saleem Ahmed, RV Deshpande, Prasad Abbayya, M Krishnappa, Laxman Savadi, AS Ponnanna, Shivalinge Gowda, Roopakala Shashidhar and Malur Nanjegowda are among the key contenders. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

15 TRAPPED AS LANDSLIDE HITS UP QUARRY

SONBHADRA, 15 NOV

A tragic incident unfolded on Friday in the Sonebhadra district of Uttar Pradesh when a portion of a stone quarry collapsed, resulting in the death of one worker and leaving at least 15 trapped. The calamity struck at a quarry owned by Krishna Mining Works in Billi Markundi, located in the Dala area, as a large rock broke away from a hillside, crashing down on labourers working below.

Initial reports suggest that between 12 and 15 workers were on site at the time of the collapse, and none were able to escape in time. Eyewitness accounts confirmed that rescue teams have recovered one body, with concerns that many more may be buried beneath the debris. Workers were reportedly drilling holes in the rock using nine compression machines when a massive upper rock layer suddenly cracked and fell.

The seriousness of the situation prompted Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, who was nearby for an event, to be immediately informed. Following the incident, police and administrative teams swiftly arrived at the site to initiate rescue operations, which are being conducted on a war footing. Officials have stated that all available resources are being mobilised to locate and rescue the trapped workers, as visuals from the site show ongoing debris removal efforts. *—Agencies*

Bihar polls: Lalu's daughter disowns family

PATNA, 15 NOV

A day after the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) suffered a crushing defeat in the Bihar assembly elections, party chief Lalu Prasad's daughter Rohini Acharya on Saturday announced that she was quitting politics and severing ties with her family.

Acharya, a doctor by training who later became a homemaker and settled in Singapore with her husband, made the announcement in a cryptic post on X. "I am quitting politics and I am disowning my family… This is what Sanjay Yadav and Rameez had asked me to do… and I am taking all the blame," she wrote.

Sanjay Yadav, a Rajya Sabha MP and one of Tejashwi Yadav's closest aides, and Rameez, an old friend of Tejashwi from a political family in Uttar Pradesh, did not respond to requests for comment. It remains unclear what they allegedly said to Acharya that prompted her announcement.

> **I am quitting politics and I am disowning my family... This is what Sanjay Yadav and Rameez had asked me to do... and I am taking all the blame**
> —Rohini Acharya

Acharya had earlier been in the spotlight for donating a kidney to her father. She contested last year's Lok Sabha election from Saran but lost. While speculation suggested she was unhappy over the expulsion of Tej Pratap Yadav from the RJD, she was seen campaigning for Tejashwi during the assembly polls.

The RJD's tally slumped from 75 seats to 24, as the ruling NDA swept the Bihar elections. The alliance delivered a decisive "200 paar" victory in the 243-member Assembly, with the BJP emerging as the single largest party. Both the BJP and JD(U) recorded nearly 85 per cent strike rates in the 101 seats each contested. *—PTI*

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RJD HEADED FOR ZERO RS SEATS

NEW DELHI, 15 NOV

The NDA's emphatic Bihar assembly victory positions it to win all upcoming Rajya Sabha seats from the state, leaving the RJD without representation by the next assembly polls. Of Bihar's 16 seats, the RJD holds five and Congress one, but with two RJD terms ending early next year and each candidate needing 42 votes, the Mahagathbandhan's strength of 35 falls short.

Further terms ending in 2026, 2028 and 2030 will also favour thea NDA, boosting its Upper House numbers where the BJP still lacks an absolute majority. *—PTI*

Girl dies after '100 sit-ups' punishment at school

PALGHAR, 15 NOV

A Class 6 student from a private school in Maharashtra's Palghar district died nearly a week after she was allegedly made to perform 100 sit-ups as punishment for arriving late, prompting authorities to launch an inquiry.

Anshika Gaud, a student of a Sativali-based school in Vasai, died at a Mumbai hospital on Friday night. According to members of the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS), she and four other students were ordered to do 100 sit-ups on 8 November.

Her mother alleged that Anshika was made to perform the sit-ups with her school bag on her back, calling the act "inhuman punishment". She said her daughter's health deteriorated rapidly afterwards, complaining of severe neck and back pain and being unable to stand up.

MNS leader Sachin More claimed Anshika had pre-existing health issues and should not have been subjected to physical punishment. A teacher at the school, however, said it remained unclear how many sit-ups the child actually performed or whether her death was directly linked to the incident. Block Education Officer Pandurang Galange confirmed that a probe has been initiated to ascertain the cause of death. No police complaint has been filed so far, officials said.

The girl's mother said the teacher justified the punishment. *—PTI*

UP to withdraw charges against accused in Akhlaq's lynching

NOIDA, 15 NOV

The Uttar Pradesh government has moved to withdraw charges against all those accused in the 2015 mob lynching of Mohammad Akhlaq in Greater Noida's Dadri, a case that triggered nationwide outrage.

Akhlaq, 50, was beaten to death by a mob in Bisada village on 28 September 2015 after an announcement from a local temple alleged he had slaughtered a cow and stored its meat in his refrigerator. The mob, led by Vishal Rana, son of a local BJP leader, and his cousin Shivam, dragged Akhlaq and his son Danish out of their home and assaulted them brutally. Akhlaq died in a Noida hospital, while Danish survived after suffering severe head injuries and undergoing major surgery. Ten years after the incident, the state government has begun the process of withdrawing the case against all accused, officials said. *—PTI*

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KHANDRE ORDERS PROBE

28 blackbucks die at Belagavi zoo in 3 days

BELAGAVI, 15 NOV

Twenty-eight blackbucks have died under mysterious circumstances in the Kittur Rani Chennamma Zoo here in the past three days, a zoo official said on Saturday.

The zoo had 38 blackbucks of which 28 have died, which has alarmed the authorities.

Karnataka Forest Minister Eshwra Khandre has ordered a probe into the deaths. He expressed concern over the deaths.

According to the Assistant Conservator of Forest Nagaraj Balhasuri, eight blackbucks died two days ago while 20 died on Saturday.

He said the veterinary doctor at the zoo suspected that they

- Forest Minister said in a statement that preliminary reports indicate that these deer died of bacterial infection.

died due to a bacterial infection though actual cause is yet to be ascertained.

"We have sent the viscera sample to the authorities at Bannerghatta Zoological Park in Bengaluru to find out the reason behind the death," Bale told reporters.

Forest Minister said in a statement that preliminary reports indicate that these deer died of an infectious disease, and all precautionary measures have been taken to prevent any other animal in the zoo from getting infected.

An expert committee should be formed to investigate whether these deaths were caused by consuming contaminated water and food or whether the disease was spread by domestic animals such as cats and to take appropriate action.

"It is a matter of concern that animals in the zoo are dying in this way. Such incidents should not recur in the future and that appropriate action should be taken as per the rules in case of negligence on the part of the staff," he said.

He warned that action will be taken if it is found that they died due to negligence of the zoo staff. *—Salar News*

Teen falls to death while taking selfie at waterfalls

CHIKKAMAGALURU, 15 NOV

A first-year engineering student from Belagavi, Varun Desai, aged 19, tragically lost his life after slipping from a waterfall while attempting to take a selfie near the Mallenahalli on Friday evening. Police reported that Desai, unfamiliar with the terrain, ventured close to the edge of the waterfall while on an outing with five more friends on motorbikes. He lost his footing and fell, with his body being recovered early Saturday morning. Desai was studying for a Bachelor of Engineering degree at a local college in Chikkamagaluru, highlighting the dangers of recklessness near natural bodies of water. *—Salar News*

Kalaburagi SDA dies 3 day after assault, 4 arrested

YADGIR, 15 NOV

Anjali Girish Kambanoor, a 38-year-old Second Division Assistant in the Social Welfare Department, succumbed to her injuries after being attacked on Wednesday morning due to a long-standing rivalry. Anjali, who had previously served as the president of Shahabad City Municipal Council, was assaulted with lethal weapons and initially hospitalised in Kalaburagi before being moved to Hyderabad for advanced treatment. Police apprehended four suspects within 12 hours of the attack, who allegedly confessed they were contracted to carry out the killing. The investigation continues as three other suspects remain at large, with a deeper inquiry into prior conflicts involving the victim's late husband, who was murdered in a related feud. *—Salar News*

4 held for selling adulterated ghee in Nandini packs

BENGALURU, 15 NOV

Bengaluru Police on Saturday said they have busted a network that was manufacturing adulterated ghee in Tamil Nadu and selling it in counterfeit Nandini packets across the city. Four people have been arrested. Police said the accused filled adulterated ghee — mixed with coconut and palm oil — into fake Nandini sachets and bottles, and supplied them to Bengaluru distributors who even held official KMF licenses. The products were then sold at wholesale and retail shops and Nandini parlours as genuine ghee. Officials seized over 8,100 litres of adulterated ghee, cash, machinery, and four goods vehicles worth about Rs 1.27 crore. The arrests followed raids based on intelligence gathered jointly by the CCB and KMF Vigilance Wing. .*—PTI*

PHOTO: SALAR

Urdu stall shines at Mysuru Dasara exhibition 2025

MYSORE, 15 NOV

The Urdu stall, established by the Karnataka Urdu Academy in collaboration with Anjuman e Taraqqi e Urdu Hind branch, has drawn significant crowds at Mysuru Dasara Exhibition since its inauguration three days ago. The stall showcases vibrant Urdu literature, poetry, calligraphy, and contemporary art. Former minister and state Congress working president Tanveer Sait inaugurated the stall, accompanied by Ayub Khan, Chairman of the Karnataka Exhibition Authority. Dr Shaista Yusuf from the Karnataka Urdu Academy lauded the collaborative effort. The event featured cultural programmes, with school children reciting Urdu Nazms and portraying Urdu poets. Renowned artists Janab Abbas Shareef and Munawar Husain captivated visitors with live calligraphy performances. *—Salar News*

Save Sankey: BJP protests tunnel road

Shobha says DPR was prepared incorrectly

BENGALURU, 15 NOV

Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje, LoP R Ashoka and others protest at Sankey Tank protest, in City, on Saturday *PHOTO: SALAR*

BJP leaders, including Leader of Opposition in the State Assembly R Ashoka, Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje and BJP leader CN Ashwath Narayan, launched the 'Save Sankey' signature campaign against the tunnel road project.

The BJP leaders initiated the campaign by signing their names on a white background.

Carrying maps of the tunnel road alignment, the BJP leaders said that the project threatens both the historic waterbody and the surrounding parkland. They

Narayan stated that the government must change the route of the tunnel road project to ensure that Sankey Tank was not harmed.

"Public space has been used for the tunnel project," he said. "People of Bengaluru do not want public spaces used for the tunnel... This is not a dictatorial rule... This is not a political issue."

Karandlaje added that the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the project has not been prepared correctly.

"They have targeted our tank... We are protesting and we will not let this (project) move forward," she said.

Ashoka said that, "The State government is making the tunnel road a money-making business... The government has not taken any survey... They have to take permission from 120 departments. They have not taken any permission.

They want an immediate tender for a tunnel road, take the commission, and send it to the Congress party in Delhi... He (Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar) is in a hurry to make money."

He said in a statement on X that: "Congress government moving to destroy Sanky Lake to build unscientific encroachments, ruining Bengaluru's beautiful nature."

Earlier, the BJP had launched a signature campaign in Lalbagh. The proposed Hebbal-Silk Board project is also set to go under the park, although Shivakumar has said it wouldn't harm the park. *—Agencies*

Youth Cong protests Bihar 'vote chori'

70 protesters were detained at a City march

BENGALURU, 15 NOV

Youth Congress members and Labour minister Santosh Lad protest at Freedom Park on Saturday *PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD*

Seventy people, including Indian Youth Congress (IYC) National President Uday Bhanu Chib, were taken into preventive custody by the police on Saturday when they attempted to march towards the office of the Election Commission in the City, demanding accountability over alleged "vote chori" and electoral irregularities.

Raising anti-BJP slogans — "Down, down BJP!" and "Vote chor gaddi chhodd!" — the members of the Karnataka Pradesh Youth Congress Committee (KPYCC) protested at Freedom Park alleging large-scale "vote chori" (vote theft) in elections across various states.

The demonstration came a day after the Congress alleged "vote chori on a gigantic scale" in the Bihar assembly elections, with Rahul Gandhi vowing an in-depth review of the outcome and saying "we could not achieve victory in such an election that was not fair from the very beginning."

The protest was led by Chib, IYC In-charge Manish Sharma, KPYCC President Gowda, and saw the participation of several senior Congress leaders from the State, including Labour Minister Santosh Lad and Rajya Sabha MP GC Chandrashekhar.

Speaking to reporters later, Lad said, "Just because they wanted to win elections, they gave Rs 10,000 each to one and a half crore women in Bihar. Apart from that, 65 lakh names have been deleted from the SIR voter list and 20 lakh votes have been added. Today the Prime Minister talks so much about technology and satellites, but the Election Commission has not even provided a digital format of the voter list."

He alleged that in Maharashtra, in just five to six months after the Lok Sabha polls, the voter list increased by 45 lakh.

After being detained by the police, one of the protesters said, "We will hold agitations across the country."

At the time of publishing, police said that the protesters would be soon released. *—PTI*

ED SAYS STILL INVESTIGATING

Lokayukta files status report in CM's MUDA case

BENGALURU, 15 NOV

The Karnataka Lokayukta filed a status report in trial court on Saturday in connection with the investigation into the alleged irregularities in allocation of MUDA land parcels to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's family.

The City Civil and Sessions Court on Saturday heard proceedings in the private complaint filed by activist Snehamayi Krishna against Siddaramaiah with regard to the charges.

The complaint accuses the Chief Minister and others of alleged irregularities in the allotment of Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) sites to members of the Siddaramaiah's family.

When the matter was called, the complainant appeared in person. The Special Public Prosecutor (SPP) representing the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the SPP appearing for the Lokayukta were also present.

During the hearing, the Lokayukta's SPP submitted a status report on the ongoing probe. The prosecutor informed the court that a substantial portion of the investigation is currently in progress and sought additional time to file a more detailed and updated report. The court adjourned the proceedings to 4 December for the next hearing. *—PTI*

ED files chargesheet against Cong MLA in export scam

NEW DELHI, 15 NOV

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has filed a chargesheet against Congress MLA Satish Krishna Sail and his company, Shree Mallikarjun Shipping Pvt. Ltd., in a money laundering investigation involving the alleged illegal export of iron ore worth Rs 44 crore. The prosecution complaint was submitted to a designated Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court in the City.

Sail, aged 59 and representing the Karwar assembly constituency in Uttara Kannada, was arrested by the ED in September. The investigation stems from a 2010 case led by the Karnataka Lokayukta, which revealed the illegal transportation of approximately 800,000 tonnes of iron ore from Bellary to Belekeri port.

Satish Krishna Sail *PHOTO: PTI*

The ED claims that the iron ore was exported to buyers in China with the assistance of Mahesh J Biliye, port conservator at Belekeri. "The criminal act of the accused persons caused a loss of Rs 44.09 crore to the government exchequer," the agency stated. Sail allegedly made payments of Rs 46.18 crore regarding the illegal purchase and concealed proceeds through foreign accounts, leading to the attachment of assets worth Rs 21 crore earlier this month. *—PTI*

Bizman held for harassing Kannada actress

BENGALURU, 15 NOV

A businessman, Aravind Venkatesh Reddy, has been arrested for allegedly stalking, harassing, and intimidating a Kannada film actress in the City. The 36-year-old actress reported that she had known Reddy since 2021, having met him at an event in Sri Lanka in 2022. Initially, they had a cordial relationship and even lived together, but his behaviour soon became obsessive and threatening.

According to her complaint, Reddy would arrive at her home intoxicated, prompting her to distance herself from him. Despite her efforts to end the relationship, he allegedly followed her, tracked her location, and morphed her photographs on Instagram to insult her. He reportedly sent men to her parental home to instigate trouble and threatened to kill her younger brother if she did not resume their relationship.

The actress attempted suicide in April 2024, distressed by Reddy's alleged threats of forced marriage and ongoing harassment.

Following the filing of a police report on 17 October, Reddy was arrested on Saturday. *—PTI*

3 die in three vehicle collision on Highway

MANGALURU, 15 NOV

A tragic chain collision involving two tankers, an autorickshaw, and an SUV resulted in the deaths of three individuals on the Mangaluru-Udupi highway on Saturday. The incident occurred around 11.15am at Panambur junction after a cow unexpectedly crossed the road, prompting a gas tanker travelling from Mulki to halt abruptly.

The preliminary investigations revealed that the autorickshaw managed to stop in time, as did the SUV behind it. However, a third tanker, approaching from the rear at high speed, failed to brake and collided with the SUV. The force of the impact pushed the SUV to the side of the road, crushing the autorickshaw between the two tankers. The driver of the autorickshaw and two passengers died instantly. *—PTI*

Saalumarada Thimmakka laid to rest with full state honours

Last rites conducted for the deceased centrerain 'Saalumarada' Thimmakka in the presence of Home Minister G Parameshwara and others at Kalagrama on the Jnana Bharathi campus *PHOTO: X/@DrParameshwara*

BENGALURU, 15 NOV

Padma Shri recipient 'Saalumarada' Thimmakka was laid to rest with full state honours in the City on Saturday. The 114-year-old environmentalist, affectionately known as 'Vruksha Maate' (Mother of Trees), passed away in a private hospital on Friday due to age-related ailments.

- Born on 30 June, 1911, Thimmakka became celebrated as 'Saalumarada' after planting 385 banyan trees along a 4.5 km stretch between Hulikal and Kudur in Ramanagara district.

Born on 30 June, 1911, Thimmakka became celebrated as 'Saalumarada' after planting 385 banyan trees along a 4.5 km stretch between Hulikal and Kudur in Ramanagara district. With no formal education and unable to have children, she began planting saplings and caring for them as her own, eventually inspiring generations through her extraordinary dedication to environmental conservation.

Her last rites were conducted according to Lingayat tradition at Kalagrama on the Jnana Bharathi campus. Home Minister G Parameshwara, Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre and several MLAs were present as her body was laid to rest.

After paying his respects, Minister Khandre announced that a State award would be instituted in Thimmakka's name. He said State had lost a true guardian of nature whose lifelong commitment had inspired lakhs of people to plant and nurture trees. As a tribute, 114 saplings will be planted at 114 locations across State, symbolising each year of her remarkable life. *—PTI*

150 SCHOOLS IN 6 TALUKS

Kolar to cultivate nutrition farms in govt schools

KOLAR, 15 NOV

The project is the brain child of Kolar Deputy Commissioner Ravi MR *PHOTO: SALAR*

The Kolar district administration has launched an initiative to promote healthy habits and environmental awareness among schoolchildren by developing Dhanvanthari Vana (Nutrition Farms) in government schools with available land.

The brain child of Kolar Deputy Commissioner Ravi MR, Dhanvanthari Vana will come up in 150 schools in the district in six taluks.

The program is also aimed at creating awareness among the school children about preserving the environment.

Steps would be taken to nurture herbs and plants with medicinal value and the students would be taught the importance of such plants, said Ravi MR .

These farms are likely to come up in 31 schools and 11 Hostels run by the government in Kolar taluk, while Mulbagal taluks will accommodate 29 farms. In the first stage, 26 various varieties of herbal and medical plants will be planted in these farms, ZP CEO Praveen P Bagewadi said.

These are likely to take about ten weeks.

He said all works pertaining to these farms will be taken up under MGNREGA programmes, making use of the locally available man power.

- The program also aims at creating awareness among the school children about preserving the environment.

Various government departments will collaborate to monitor and implement the project, including the Social Forestry department.

Jala, Assistant Mistress of the government Higher Primary School in Chakarasanahalli, Kolar taluk said such farms could allow teachers to use the plants as live models for teaching various subjects. *—Salar News*

Kalaburagi plunges to 1.2°C as winter arrives

KALABURAGI, 15 NOV

With winter tightening its grip on State, children in Kalaburgi have begun lighting small fires and gathering around them to stay warm against the biting cold. The region has seen a sharp drop in temperatures over the past few days, forcing residents—especially children—to find simple ways to cope with the chill. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Kalaburgi recorded a maximum temperature of 31°C, while the minimum plunged to a frigid 1.2°C at 8.30am on Saturday. As the cold wave intensifies, groups of children were seen huddling together near makeshift fires early in the morning, using the warmth to continue their routine activities. *—ANI*

RaGa meets Kharge over Cong's Bihar loss

Alleges the election process is 'questionable'

NEW DELHI, 15 NOV

A day after facing a severe drubbing in Bihar, the Congress on Saturday questioned the role of the Election Commission in the poll process while its top leaders, including Rahul Gandhi and party chief Mallikarjun Kharge, went into a huddle to discuss the poll outcome.

Kharge and Gandhi were joined by AICC general secretary KC Venugopal, party treasurer Ajay Maken and AICC Bihar in-charge Krishna Allavaru, sources said.

According to the sources, the leaders met to discuss the Congress' poor performance in Bihar, where the party won only six of the 61 seats it contested, its second-worst show in the state after 2010, when it won only four seats.

Gandhi did not speak to the media persons after the meeting, as the leaders of the Mahagathbandhan remained in a state of disbelief after the NDA swept the polls.

Asked about the Bihar poll outcome and the party's poor performance, Venugopal sought to put the entire blame on the Election Commission, alleging that the entire poll process is questionable and there is no transparency. The party would soon analyse the result and would come out with concrete proof in the next few weeks, he said.

"This result that has come from Bihar is unbelievable for all of us. This is not only for Congress. The entire Bihar people are not believing it and also our alliance partners. We discussed with all of them; they are not believing it," Venugopal said.

Alleging that the process of electioneering is "completely questionable", he said the party leaders have been continuously raising the issue during electioneering. *—PTI*

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with party Chief Mallikarjun Kharge **PHOTO: PTI**

> **The result of this election does not whitewash the misdeeds and reckless actions of the ECI. The reputation of the #ECI is at its lowest point**
>
> --MK Stalin, TN Chief Minister

'Voters went with NDA over fear of jungle raj'

PK says NDA won by giving cash to women

PATNA, 15 NOV

Former poll strategist Prashant Kishor's Jan Suraaj Party, which failed to open its account in the Bihar assembly, on Saturday claimed that a section of its voters ended up siding with the BJP-led NDA "out of fear of return of jungle raj under the RJD".

Addressing a press conference here a day after the poll results were announced, its national president Uday Singh also claimed "polarisation" took place in the Seemanchal region in the aftermath of the blast near Red Fort in Delhi, a day before the 11 November polling was held in the area.

"I can say there was fear of the return of jungle raj under the RJD. Although I am not saying that there has been any jungle raj, the fear was there. Many people, who would have given us a chance, ended up voting for the NDA out of that fear," said Singh, the former BJP MP. He added, "Let me make a distinction here. I am saying people had a problem with RJD, not with the Congress or other constituents of the opposition Mahagath bandhan". Singh also said another factor came into play after the Delhi blast.

Additionally, former poll strategist Prashant Kishor's Jan Suraaj, which failed to open its account in the Bihar assembly, on Saturday expressed disappointment over its poll debacle, and said cash transfer to the accounts of women played an important role in the NDA's victory.

The party was unable to galvanise votes in its favour, despite a high-pitched campaign and raising pressing issues such as unemployment, migration and the dearth of industries in the state. *—PTI*

Jan Suraaj National President Uday Singh with the party's Bihar Chief Manoj Bharti during a press conference in Patna **PHOTO: PTI**

> **The Election Commission should think if the money distribution (by the Bihar government under the scheme) was correct**
>
> --Sharad Pawar, NCP (SP) President

3 lakh voters added via SIR, says EC

NEW DELHI, 15 NOV

Election Commission officials on Saturday clarified that the rise in Bihar's voter count was due to fresh additions of 3 lakh voters added after the final electoral roll was published.

The clarification followed a Congress social media post noting that while the EC's 6 October poll-schedule announcement listed 7.42 crore voters, later releases cited 7.45 crore.

Officials explained that the 7.42 crore figure came from the roll finalised on 30 September after a special intensive revision. Under election rules, eligible citizens may still apply for inclusion until ten days before the last date for filing nominations in each phase, even after polls are announced. All valid applications received from 1 October until the respective nomination deadlines were examined, and nearly three lakh eligible voters were added.

An official said the additions ensured that no eligible voter was excluded from the electoral process. The revised figure was reflected in the Commission's press release after voting. *—PTI*

BJP SUSPENDS REBELS AMID DISSENT

PATNA, 15 NOV

The BJP has moved swiftly against dissent in Bihar, suspending former Union Minister **Raj Kumar Singh** and two other leaders for alleged anti-party activities.

Singh, a former MP from Arrah and ex-Union Home Secretary who joined the BJP in 2013, resigned from the party's primary membership shortly after receiving the suspension notice. MLC Ashok Agarwal and his wife, Katihar Mayor Usha Agarwal, were also suspended for campaigning for their son, who contested the Katihar Assembly seat on a VIP ticket against the BJP's sitting MLA and former Deputy Chief Minister Tarkishor Prasad.

The suspension letters, issued by Bihar BJP headquarters in-charge Arvind Sharma, accused the leaders of breaching party discipline and causing damage to the organisation's reputation. They have been asked to explain within a week why they should not be expelled, though party sources suggest expulsion is almost certain.

Singh has been increasingly critical of the BJP and NDA leadership in Bihar since losing the 2024 Lok Sabha election. *—PTI*

CHIRAG PASWAN BACKS NITISH FOR CHIEF MINISTER

PATNA, 15 NOV

Union Minister Chirag Paswan expressed his interest of joining the new Bihar government, reiterating that he personally believes Nitish Kumar should remain as Chief Minister.

Speaking at a press conference, Paswan highlighted his Lok Janshakti Party (LJP-RV)'s successful campaign, securing 19 out of the 28 seats contested in the recent assembly polls. Paswan noted that representatives from his party had met Kumar to congratulate him on the NDA's victory, asserting, "We too are looking forward to joining the government... I personally feel that Nitish Kumar should continue to head the government." He dismissed opposition claims of rifts between his party and Kumar's Janata Dal (United), blaming the RJD's past successes on the LJP's absence from the NDA during previous elections. *—PTI*

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar during a meeting with Union Minister and LJP (Ram Vilas) Chief Chirag Paswan a day after BJP-led NDA's victory in the state's Assembly elections, in Patna **PHOTO: PTI**

24 MINISTERS WON SEATS IN POLLS

In a significant political outcome, the ruling NDA has retained power in Bihar, with 24 of the 25 state ministers successfully defending their seats. Following their victories, Deputy CMs Samrat Choudhary and Vijay Kumar Sinha of the BJP showcased their stronghold in Tarapur and Lakhisarai. Notably, CM Nitish Kumar did not contest the polls, while BJP veteran Prem Kumar secured Gaya Town for an impressive eighth term. The only minister to lose was Sumit Kumar Singh, who fell short in Chakai against RJD's Savitri Devi by 13,000 votes. *—PTI*

3 SEATS WON BY MARGIN UNDER 100

The Bihar assembly elections witnessed thrillingly close races, with three seats decided by margins of fewer than 100 votes. JD(U) candidate Radha Charan Shah won Sandesh by just 27 votes over RJD's Dipu Singh, while BJP's Mahesh Paswan edged out CPI(ML) Liberation's Shiv Prakash Ranjan by only 95 votes in Agiaon. Moreover, the Ramgarh seat was clinched by BSP's Satish Kumar Singh Yadav with a narrow 30-vote lead. *—PTI*

EAM chairs US envoys conference on bilateral ties

NEW YORK, 15 NOV

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar convened a conference of India's Consuls General in the US to review bilateral ties between Washington and New Delhi, emphasising support for diaspora activities. "Reviewed our bilateral ties and support for diaspora activities. Appreciate the commitment and efforts of our Embassy & Consulates to strengthening the India-US partnership," Jaishankar said. The conference took place on Friday at the Consulate General of India in New York. Earlier, Jaishankar met UN Secretary-General António Guterres at UN Headquarters, where he was joined by Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador P Harish. *—PTI*

Haryana Minister clashes with police over FIR

CHANDIGARH, 15 NOV

Anil Vij, Haryana's Transport, Energy and Labour Minister, was involved in a heated exchange with a police official during a District Grievance Redressal Committee meeting in Kaithal. Vij accused the officer of failing to comply with his directive to register a Zero FIR in a fraud case, stating, "These are my orders; how can my orders be defied?" Following his intervention, the minister spoke with the complainant, who insisted that the Kaithal police should file the case. The police official defended himself, saying, "Sir, you are not doing justice," to which Vij responded, "I am doing justice." Vij later emphasised the importance of taking immediate action on pending complaints and initiated several investigations into police conduct. *—PTI*

With SIR, NDA eyes victory in TN and Kerala

VIRUDHUNAGAR, 15 NOV

Following the NDA's resounding victory in the Bihar Assembly elections, BJP state chief Nainar Nagendran expressed confidence in a similar success in the 2026 Tamil Nadu Assembly polls. "This is a huge victory for our alliance... our alliance in Tamil Nadu will ensure a resounding win," he stated, criticising Chief Minister **MK Stalin** for opposing centrally sponsored schemes like PM SHRI.

Meanwhile, the CPI(M), a key ally of the ruling DMK, urged the Election Commission to extend the 4 December deadline for submitting enumeration forms under the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the voters' list. CPI(M) State Secretary P Shanmugam highlighted practical challenges, stating, "Tracing names of family members online from the electoral rolls is extremely difficult," and called for more time to ensure complete participation.

Echoing these concerns, TVK founder Vijay cautioned that many eligible voters may lose their right to vote due to ongoing issues, advocating for prompt verification of names on the electoral rolls. He noted that individuals have reported missing names from the draft voter list.

However, BJP Kerala Chief Rajeev Chandrasekhar attributed their Bihar success to the SIR, asserting that the removal of fake voters has transformed the political landscape. *—Agencies*

Aadhaar is proof of identity, not citizenship: EC to SC

NEW DELHI, 15 NOV

The Election Commission of India has told the Supreme Court that it had already issued instructions for using the Aadhaar card as proof of identity and not of citizenship, for inclusion or exclusion in the revised voter list of Bihar. In a reply filed in the top court, the poll panel said that the court on 8 September had already clarified the usage of Aadhaar for updating the voter list. It said the court had stated that the Aadhaar card was to be used for the purpose of establishing identity in view of Section 23(4) of the Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1950 . The poll panel said the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), in an office memorandum (OM) in August 2023, had clarified that Aadhaar was not proof of citizenship, residence, or date of birth. *—PTI*

WB BLOs protest against excessive SIR workload

KOLKATA, 15 NOV

Several Block-Level Officers (BLOs) in Siliguri and Howrah protested on Saturday, alleging that the EC was placing them under intense and unreasonable work pressure. Officers complained of receiving late-night instructions and sudden orders to shift to digital data entry. At Siliguri's Dinabandhu Mancha training center, many BLOs walked out of a digital data-entry session, claiming the EC had abruptly enforced the new system and was demanding immediate training. *—PTI*

In Gujarat, PM tears into 'Muslim League' Congress

SURAT, 15 NOV

Prime Minister Narendra Modi claimed that the people of Bihar have decisively rejected the "poison of casteism" propagated by the opposition, labelling the Congress party as a "Muslim League-Maoist Congress" combination. Speaking at a function in Surat, where he was honoured by Bihari residents following the BJP-led NDA's significant victory in the recent assembly polls, Modi took aim at Rahul Gandhi and his leadership. He noted that "nationalist leaders" within the Congress, who once collaborated with former prime ministers Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi, are disheartened by Gandhi's antics.

> **That those who ruled for 50-60 years end up like this in a decade or two is clearly a matter of introspection for them**
>
> -Narendra Modi, Prime Minister on Bihar results

Modi stated, "People have rejected the 'Muslim League-Maoist Congress' (MMC) party" and indicated that the Congress is struggling to understand its electoral defeats, often attributing them to EVMs, the Election Commission, and issues with electoral rolls. The Prime Minister emphasised that even Dalits have turned away from the Congress, as the NDA won 34 out of 38 seats where Dalits hold a majority. The results confirmed the decimation of the Mahagathbandhan alliance, comprising the Congress, RJD, and others. *—PTI*

NO JUSTICE?

UP to drop charges against Akhlaq's lynching accused

NOIDA, 15 NOV

The Uttar Pradesh government has moved to withdraw charges against all those accused in the 2015 mob lynching of Mohammad Akhlaq in Greater Noida's Dadri, a case that had sparked nationwide outrage.

Additional District Government Counsel Bhag Singh Bhati told PTI on Saturday that the state has sent a formal request for the withdrawal of prosecution.

"A letter has been received from the government regarding the withdrawal of the case against all the accused in the Akhlaq murder case. The application has been submitted before the Surajpur court and will be heard on 12 December," Bhati said.

Mohammad Akhlaq **PHOTO: ANI**

Advocate Yusuf Saifi, who represents the Akhlaq family, said he had not yet seen the official documents.

"I have only heard about it. I will be able to comment after examining the documents before or on the date of the hearing," he said.

Akhlaq, 52, a resident of Bisada village in Greater Noida, was dragged out of his home and beaten to death by a mob on 28 September, 2015, after announcements over a loudspeaker allegedly claimed he had slaughtered a cow and stored beef in his refrigerator.

The case is pending before the district court in Surajpur, Greater Noida, a decade after the incident. *—PTI*

Congress signals solo bid for Mumbai civic polls

MUMBAI, 15 NOV

In what signals a potential rift within the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), Congress leader **Varsha Gaikwad** on Saturday announced that the party is preparing to contest the upcoming Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) elections independently.

Addressing a party meeting, Mumbai Congress president Gaikwad called on workers to resolve to "unfurl the Congress flag in the BMC" and to be ready to contest all 227 seats. The BMC elections, for the country's richest municipal body, are expected to take place in January 2026.

Gaikwad made the remarks in the presence of senior leaders, including AICC general secretary Ramesh Chennithala and Maharashtra Congress President Harshwardhan Sapkal. Her statement comes at a time when speculation is growing that Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray and his cousin, MNS chief Raj Thackeray, may join forces for the civic polls.

A section of Congress leaders are opposed to involving Raj in any alliance, citing his history of taking an aggressive stand against North Indian migrants. When reporters previously asked Chennithala about contesting alone, he had said such decisions were best left to the local units. *—PTI*

Rains to return to Tamil Nadu and Puducherry

CHENNAI, 15 NOV

Rains are set to return to Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry within the next 24 hours after a brief break, the Regional Meteorological Centre said on Saturday. Heavy rain is likely at isolated places in Mayiladuthurai, Nagapattinam, Tiruvarur, Thanjavur and Pudukottai districts, with thunderstorms and lightning expected in parts of Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal.The North-East Monsoon, which began on 16 October, has brought 30 cm of rainfall to Tamil Nadu so far. An upper air circulation now lies over southern Sri Lanka and the adjoining southwest Bay of Bengal. Fishermen have been advised not to venture into the sea on 15–16 November due to squally winds. Tiruchendur recorded the highest rainfall at 8 cm, while Chennai may see light rain. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Singer Humane Sagar hospitalised with liver failure

BHUBANESWAR, 15 NOV

Popular Odia singer Humane Sagar has been admitted to AIIMS Bhubaneswar with acute-on-chronic liver failure and is in a critical condition, the hospital confirmed. The 36-year-old was brought in on Friday and diagnosed with multi-organ dysfunction syndrome, severe liver complications and bilateral pneumonia. He remains critically ill and is on non-invasive ventilator support.BJD supremo and former Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik voiced concern over Sagar's condition, wishing him a speedy and complete recovery in a post on X. Sagar became widely known after winning the second season of a reality singing competition in 2012, and his songs continue to enjoy widespread popularity in Odisha. *—PTI*

New gecko in Andhra named after Lord Vishnu

KOLKATA, 15 NOV

Scientists from the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) have discovered a new slender gecko species in the Tirumala hill ranges of the Seshachalam Biosphere Reserve in Andhra Pradesh. The species, Hemiphyllodactylus venkatadri sp. nov, is named after the sacred Venkatadri Hills, drawing from the Sanskrit words Venkata and Adri. Published in Herpetozoa (Vol. 38, 2025), the discovery was made by ZSI units in Hyderabad and Kolkata along with Fakir Mohan University. Molecular analysis shows a 9.7–12.9 per cent genetic divergence from related peninsular species. Found under tree bark in a sandalwood plantation at 881 metres, the gecko has distinct morphological traits. *—PTI*

SC to examine plea on vacant PG seats

NEW DELHI, 15 NOV

The Supreme Court will on Monday hear a plea seeking directions to the National Medical Commission (NMC) to create a mechanism ensuring that no postgraduate seats in pre-clinical and para-clinical disciplines remain vacant in medical colleges. The petitioner has also sought five years' data on such vacancies, citing concerns over repeated wastage of training capacity. A bench led by Chief Justice BR Gavai, and Justices K Vinod Chandran and NV Anjaria, will take up the matter.The issue has come before the court multiple times. Earlier this year, the SC said medical seats should not be left vacant and asked the Centre to consult states and stakeholders. In 2023, it also flagged vacant super-specialty seats and the Centre proposed a committee to address the problem. *—PTI*

Lone breadwinner in family killed in Nowgam blast

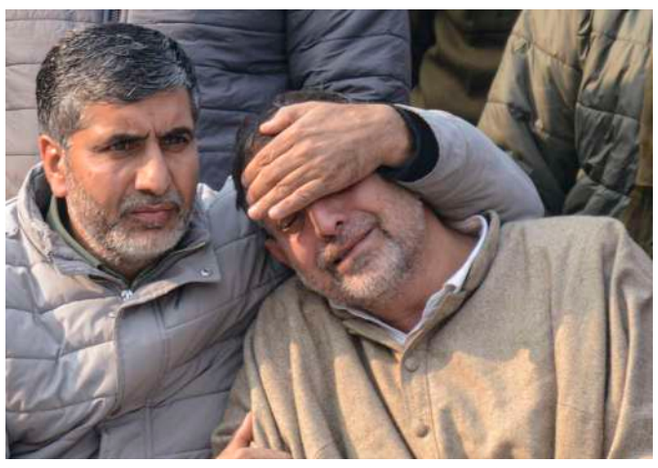
Blast heard 1 km away; body parts scattered at the site

SRINAGAR, 15 NOV

Mohammad Shafi Parray left home on Friday morning hoping to earn a day's livelihood as he assisted police investigators in collecting samples from explosives seized from a recently busted "white-collar" terror module. The 47-year-old tailor, a devout community volunteer and the sole breadwinner for his family, did not know it would be his last job.

Parray spent most of the day at Nowgam Police Station, returning home twice for Friday prayers and later for dinner. In the evening, he put on warm clothes to brave the winter chill and stepped out again to help collect remaining samples from explosive material seized in Faridabad, Haryana. His wife, daughter and two sons had no idea it would be their final goodbye.

He was among the nine people killed in the accidental blast that ripped through the Nowgam Police Station late on Friday night. The explosion sent clouds of smoke billowing and plunged the entire area into grief.



Bereaved family members of the people killed in the blast at Nowgam police station mourn in Srinagar *PHOTO: PTI*

Neighbours said the family initially learnt from police that Parray had been injured. Early on Saturday, they were told he had succumbed to his injuries and were asked to identify the body.

As news of his death spread, relatives and locals thronged the family's two-storey home, where wails echoed through the neighbourhood. Women tried in vain to console his wife, children and sisters. Neighbours remembered Parray as a man of integrity and the president of the local mosque. His shop at Wanabal Chowk had been the family's only source of income.

- Local resident Jawhar Ahmad Wani said the neighbourhood was jolted awake by the blast, which shattered windowpanes nearly a kilometre away.

Local resident Jawhar Ahmad Wani said the neighbourhood was jolted awake by the blast, which shattered windowpanes nearly a kilometre away. Residents rushed to the site and helped retrieve bodies and the injured. "We found body parts scattered. I picked up someone's arm," Wani said. Tariq Ahmad recalled identifying Parray's body, which had no legs.

As the community comes to terms with the tragedy, locals have one appeal: that the government support the family. "The lieutenant governor should provide a job to his son so the family can survive," Wani said. *—PTI*

PROBE WIDENS

A CCTV footage from inside the Red Fort metro station shows routine commuter movement before a sudden, violent tremor jolts the premises at the moment of the nearby car blast that killed 13 people, officials said. Objects rattle and passengers flinch as the shockwave reverberates through the station *PHOTO: PTI*

2 Al Falah University doctors detained in Delhi blast

NEW DELHI, 15 NOV

Investigators probing the Red Fort blast and the wider "white-collar terror module" have detained multiple individuals across Delhi, Haryana, Punjab and West Bengal, including several doctors linked to Al Falah University, officials said on Saturday.

Delhi Police detained three persons on Friday night, including two Al Falah University doctors, Mohammad and Mustakim, from Haryana's Nuh district. Both were close to Dr Umar Nabi, the assistant professor who was confirmed through DNA testing as the driver of the car that exploded near the Red Fort, killing 13 people. The two doctors were also allegedly in touch with Dr Muzammil Ganaie, arrested earlier in the terror module case. One of them was in Delhi on the day of the blast to appear for an AIIMS interview.

Police also questioned a tea seller in Wazirpur Industrial Area, where Umar briefly stopped before the explosion, and sought visitor records from a mosque near Ramlila Maidan. Investigators have additionally visited Al Falah University's Okhla office for details of the suspects.

In a parallel operation in Nuh, agencies detained Dinesh alias Dabbu for allegedly selling NPK fertiliser illegally. Module members had pooled around Rs 26 lakh to procure explosive materials, spending Rs 3 lakh on NPK, commonly used in improvised bombs. Investigators are probing whether he supplied the fertiliser to the suspects.

The NIA also arrested Janisur Alam alias Nisar, an MBBS student of Al Falah University, from Uttar Dinajpur's Surjapur Bazar in West Bengal. Alam, tracked through tower location data, was intercepted while returning from a family wedding. Digital devices were seized from him, and he is being taken to Siliguri for further questioning. His family has denied any extremist links.

In Punjab's Pathankot, a 45-year-old surgeon who previously worked at Al Falah University was detained for questioning.

Investigators say suspects communicated via a Switzerland-based encrypted app as they coordinated activities across Jammu & Kashmir, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. *—PTI*

COPS TRACK DOWN VEHICLES PARKED NEAR EXPLODED CAR

Investigators probing the Red Fort blast are tracing all vehicles parked near the Haryana-registered Hyundai i20 that exploded, killing 13 people. Drivers and owners are being questioned to establish whether they saw Dr Umar Nabi or anyone else enter or exit the car during the three hours it remained in the parking area. Police are also examining whether the explosive device was planted there. Parallelly, agencies are trying to locate around 15 Al Falah University doctors who were in contact with arrested accused Dr Muzammil Ganaie but have since gone incommunicado, raising further suspicion in the wider conspiracy probe.

Makers of 'Haal' to challenge HC order cutting beef biryani scene

KOCHI, 15 NOV

The makers of the Malayalam film 'Haal' on Saturday said they will file a review petition against two deletions ordered by the Kerala High Court while directing them to obtain a fresh certificate from the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC). The court had asked the producers to resubmit the film to the CBFC after carrying out two excisions, following a petition alleging inordinate delay in certification.

On Friday, the High Court noted that the CBFC's insistence on six cuts and an Adults-only (A) certificate could not stand if it overlooked "the foundational principles of secularism and fraternity." The petitioners, through their lawyer, had agreed to remove a scene showing the consumption of beef biriyani, dialogues deemed demeaning to a cultural organisation, and to blur a rakhi wherever it appeared. Certain scenes depicting court proceedings were also to be deleted.

However, director Rafeek Veera said neither he nor producer Juby Thomas had authorised their advocate to consent to these deletions. He said the lawyer's miscommunication resulted in the court recording acceptance of the cuts. "It was not our decision. We had not agreed to remove the beef biriyani scene or others, and nothing was given in writing," Veera said, adding that they intended to discuss the scenes before taking a call.

The court had asked the producers to resubmit the film to the CBFC after carrying out two excisions *PHOTO: INSTAGRAM*

- The remaining four cuts, primarily related to alleged Christian religious sensitivities, including a dialogue attributed to the Thamarassery Bishop, were set aside.

The CBFC Revising Committee had earlier granted the film an A certificate, citing socio-cultural sensitivities.

Justice VG Arun personally viewed the film last month and observed that it did not misrepresent interfaith relationships or portray legitimate religious viewpoints as intolerant. *—PTI*

Suspended official among 26 booked for Pune land sale

PUNE, 15 NOV

A suspended woman sub-registrar is among 26 people booked for the alleged illegal sale of a 15-acre plot belonging to the Maharashtra Animal Husbandry Department in Tathawade, Pimpri Chinchwad, police said on Saturday. The land, classified as non-transferable and in the department's possession since 1945, was sold for 33 crore despite clear restrictions recorded in official land documents.

Vidya Shankar Bade, senior clerk and in-charge sub-registrar (Class II), had been suspended after an inquiry found she registered the sale deed even though updated records showed the land could not be sold without government approval. Investigators found she allegedly used a "skip" option in the registration software to bypass verification safeguards.

Police said 23 people claiming to be the heirs of Herambh Gupchup, whose name appeared on an outdated 7/12 extract though he died in 1961, sold the land to two buyers with Bade's help. The tehsildar's office had already corrected the record to reflect government ownership. Assistant Commissioner of Police Sachin Hire said a cheating case has been registered against all 26 accused. *—PTI*

'Delhi's pollution driven by PM10, 62 hotspots identified'

NEW DELHI, 15 NOV

Delhi Environment Minister **Manjinder Singh Sirsa** on Saturday said the capital's rising pollution levels are being driven largely by PM10 emissions linked to construction activity, dusty roads and traffic congestion. He said the government has identified 62 hotspots where dust or traffic are the primary contributors and is accelerating mitigation efforts.

Sirsa acknowledged that Delhi's sanitation systems and road conditions "require a lot of work", with gaps in local upkeep significantly worsening air quality. With winter setting in, accumulated dust is turning into lingering smog, he said, noting that the fight for cleaner air involves addressing 10 major pollution sources.

He added that while stubble burning remains a factor, its impact is expected to decline as the sowing season begins. Sirsa also pointed to emissions from industrial units shifted to neighbouring states, which he said continue to affect border areas.

- On 11 Nov, Delhi's AQI entered the 'severe' for the first time this season, a level last recorded in December 2024.

On 11 November, Delhi's average Air Quality Index entered the 'severe' category for the first time this season, a level last recorded in December 2024. After three days of severe pollution, the AQI eased slightly on Friday, slipping into the 'very poor' range. *—PTI*

30,000 CR DISPUTE

Melodrama, says court as Karisma's daughter flags unpaid college fees

NEW DELHI, 15 NOV

The Delhi High Court on Friday asked the parties involved in the Rs 30,000 crore Sunjay Kapur estate dispute to avoid melodrama, while hearing a petition by actor Karisma Kapoor's children, Samaira and Kiaan, over unpaid university fees.

Senior advocate Mahesh Jethmalani, representing the children, claimed that two months of Samaira's US education expenses were not released by Priya Kapur, the late industrialist's wife, arguing it reflected broader inconsistencies in the estate's management and raised questions over the validity of Sunjay Kapur's will.

Priya Kapur's counsel, senior advocate Rajiv Nayyar, termed the claim baseless, stating she has consistently looked after the children's needs and that the fees have already been paid. Nayyar alleged the petition was aimed at generating media attention.

Justice Jyoti Singh warned the lawyers not to prolong such arguments in court, telling senior advocate Shyel Trehan, also representing Priya Kapur: "I don't want to spend more than 30 seconds on this. I don't want this hearing to be melodramatic. This question should not come to my court again."

The dispute centres on allegations that Priya Kapur forged Sunjay Kapur's March 21, 2025, will to gain full control of his assets. Jethmalani highlighted discrepancies in the will's metadata, modification dates, absence of an executor, misspellings of Sunjay's name, and signatures on blank sheets. Priya Kapur's counsel dismissed these as routine objections often raised in will contests.

Earlier, the court asked Priya Kapur to provide an asset list. She informed the court that Samaira and Kiaan have already received Rs 1,900 crore from the family trust.

Sunjay Kapur, who died during a polo match in London, was married to Karisma Kapoor for 13 years until 2016 and later to Priya Kapur. *—Agencies*

Life under threat, says seer held for sexually harassing 16

NEW DELHI, 15 NOV

Chaitanyananda Saraswati, accused of sexually harassing 16 students at a private management institute in southwest Delhi, has told a Delhi court that his life is under threat inside Tihar Jail. The self-styled godman, who previously served as the institute's chairman, is in judicial custody over allegations that he molested several female students.

He was produced before Judicial Magistrate Animesh Kumar on Friday after completing 14 days of judicial custody.

During the hearing, Chaitanyananda claimed that prison authorities had denied him permission to wear his monk's robes despite repeated requests, and had also refused to provide the restricted diet normally followed by monks. The court sought a detailed status report from Tihar authorities and has listed the matter for 18 November.

Earlier, on 7 November, he withdrew his bail plea before a session's court, with his counsel stating that the charges needed to be reassessed once the charge sheet was filed. His bail plea had alleged that the complaints were "tutored" and driven by resentment over the strict discipline he claimed to have enforced at the institute.

Delhi Police informed the session's court on 27 October that they had examined nine of the 16 alleged victims.

The court had earlier observed, on 13 October, that the gravity of the offence increased significantly due to the number of complainants. Chaitan yananda, aged 62, was arrested from Agra on 28 September. *—PTI*

Kerala warns of brain fever ahead of Sabrimala season

PATHANAMTHITTA, 15 NOV

Kerala's health department on Saturday issued a detailed advisory for Sabarimala pilgrims, highlighting precautions against water entering the nose while bathing in rivers, amid recent cases of amoebic meningoencephalitis (brain fever) in the state.

Pilgrims under medical treatment have been asked to carry their records and continue regular medications. Mild exercise before the pilgrimage, slow climbing with breaks, and seeking help for fatigue, chest pain or breathlessness were advised. Devotees have been urged to drink only boiled water, practise hand hygiene, eat freshly prepared food, and avoid open defecation.

The advisory also warns pilgrims to seek immediate care in case of snakebite. Emergency assistance is available at 04735 203232.

Health Minister Veena George said doctors from medical colleges and trained volunteers have been deployed along the routes. A 24-hour control centre will operate at Pampa, with emergency medical centres from Pampa to Sannidhanam and Konni Medical College acting as the base hospital. Pathanamthitta General Hospital now has emergency cardiology services and a cath lab, and cardiac-equipped ambulances will be stationed along key points. All hospitals will have defibrillators, ventilators and cardiac monitors, while labs and operation theatres will function at Nilakkal and Pampa. *—PTI*

Why is India upping forces at chokepoint with B'desh?

Known colloquially as the "Chicken's Neck," the Siliguri Corridor is a narrow 22km strip linking mainland India to its seven northeastern states. Sandwiched between Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and China, it remains one of India's most sensitive geopolitical chokepoints.

According to media reports this week, India's military has reinforced its eastern frontier by establishing three fully operational garrisons at strategic points around the Siliguri Corridor near the India-Bangladesh border.

DW Bengali's Syamantak Ghosh, who frequently reports from the border regions, noted that while Indian officials remain silent on new military developments, evidence of extensive troop mobilization and reinforced deployments is clear.

The increased Indian military presence near Bangladesh comes as ties between the South Asian neighbors have deteriorated after the ouster of Bangladeshi leader Sheikh Hasina in August 2024.

During her 15-year rule, Hasina ensured relatively stable ties between Bangladesh and India. The interim government in Dhaka, established after Hasina fled to India, is no longer as friendly towards New Delhi.

Sheikh Hasina's continued stay in India under Narendra Modi's government has further strained trust between the two nations **PHOTO: PTI**

INDIA'S SHOW OF FORCE IN THE NORTHEAST

Harsh V Pant, head of the Strategic Studies Programme at the New Delhi think tank Observer Research Foundation (ORF), said that the Siliguri Corridor is a "strategic vulnerability that India must safeguard."

This comes "amid rising anti-India sentiment in Bangladesh and indications that the Yunus government is not favorably inclined toward New Delhi," he told DW, referring to Nobel Peace laureate Muhammad Yunus, who is heading the interim administration in Bangladesh.

Along with the reports of new garrisons, India's air force also staged one of its largest-ever air shows in the northeastern state of Assam on 9 November. This came ahead of seven days of large-scale air force exercises across northeast India that run until 20 November.

This all coincides with a visit by Pakistan's navy chief to Dhaka, and a Pakistani warship anchored off Bangladesh for the first time since the war of independence in 1971.

Pant said that India has consistently signaled through military exercises "that it is cognizant of the challenges it faces in the region." But he believes the air show was not "particularly targeted at anything."

Retired Indian Lieutenant General Utpal Bhattacharya shared a similar perspective.

"Sometimes these are routine exercises, sometimes strategic signaling," he told DW. "Intentions can change overnight. Today's friend can become tomorrow's adversary if trust erodes."

INDIA-BANGLADESH TIES AT A LOW POINT

Although Pant said India's military moves in the region look defensive and should not be seen as seeking conflict, he warned tensions could rise further due to "provocative" statements from Bangladesh's interim government.

Pant was referring to comments made by Yunus in March, in which he described India's northeastern states as "landlocked" and called Bangladesh "the only gateway to the ocean for the region."

Dhaka has maintained that Yunus' remark on India's northeast was intended to underline the potential for regional connectivity. However, due to the area's geopolitical sensitivity, the comment did not sit well with New Delhi.

Both governments have stayed quiet on recent military developments and declined DW's requests for comment.

With national elections in Bangladesh due in next February, India appears to be "waiting out" the interim government, signaling it will engage "only with an elected administration."

"Once elections happen and there is a government with a mandate, then normalization can start," said Pant.

WHAT IS THE BACKGROUND OF TENSIONS?

After the ouster of Hasina in August 2024, relations between India and Bangladesh hit their lowest point in years.

During her 15-year tenure, Hasina helped dismantle anti-India insurgent networks, curbed militancy, and advanced connectivity projects — including allowing India access to the Bay of Bengal, while bolstering security along the 4,000km border.

However, mistrust lingered under the surface. India's 2019 Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), which allowed a streamlined citizenship process for Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and Christian religious minorities from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, did not sit well with Bangladesh's Muslim-majority population.

Rhetoric in India branding Bengali-speaking migrants as "Bangladeshi infiltrators" also deepened hostility. After Hasina's fall, this anti-India sentiment boiled to the surface, exacerbated by the former prime minister fleeing to India. Hasina's ongoing refuge in India has deepened the existing distrust. Despite repeated requests from Dhaka, New Delhi has remained silent on sending her back. Bangladesh sees her access to Indian and international media as a further provocation.

On 12 November, Dhaka summoned the Indian envoy to express concern over Hasina's media appearances. She faces trial in absentia for crimes against humanity linked to last year's deadly crackdown on anti-government protesters, with a verdict due on November 17. Former Bangladeshi diplomat M Humayun Kabir told DW that for 15 years, India has appeared to believe it could control Dhaka. "That era has now ended," Kabir said, even as "India's inclination to dominate Bangladesh has intensified."

PAKISTAN-BANGLADESH 'NEWFOUND LOVE'

Along with the renewed tensions between India and Bangladesh, comes what Pant from ORF has called a "newfound love between Bangladesh and Pakistan."

It was with Pakistan that Bangladesh fought a bloody war to break free from in 1971, and India was a major supporter of the cause both diplomatically and militarily. But since Bangladesh's interim government took power, Pakistan has stepped up its engagement with Dhaka. Islamabad has sent high-level delegations, including its foreign minister and intelligence chief, to Dhaka, signed trade agreements, and revived military cooperation with naval visits and defense talks. Analysts say Bangladesh is trying to counter India's influence, while New Delhi sees the rapprochement as a security threat. "Bangladesh will always acknowledge India's role in 1971," security analyst and retired Bangladeshi general Fazle Elahi Akbar told DW. "But that doesn't mean it will keep bowing to India when its own interests are being sidelined," he added. Former diplomat Kabir said that while Bangladesh "understands the foundations of its ties with India," there is the need for "mutual respect, equality, and dignity," elements Kabir argues are missing on India's part. *—DW News*

SALAR ساہر

Weakened by Israel, Palestinian Prez tuns 90

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas turned 90 on Saturday, still holding authority over fragmented areas of the West Bank, but marginalised, weakened by Israel, and deeply unpopular among Palestinians. His influence over postwar Gaza is minimal, and his long-standing failure to hold elections has left Palestinians largely leaderless at a time of existential crisis.

Abbas, the world's second-oldest serving president after Cameroon's Paul Biya, has been in office for 20 years. Critics say his inability to secure a Palestinian state, once his central aim, has eroded legitimacy. Security cooperation with Israel has kept him internationally credible but has also fuelled perceptions that the Palestinian Authority (PA) serves as a subcontractor of the occupation.

Israel's campaign against Hamas, which has decimated Gaza, has worsened Abbas' position. The West Bank remains under tight Israeli control, with expanding settlements and increasing settler violence. Right-wing Israeli factions are pressing for annexation, threatening the last prospects of statehood. U.S. and international efforts defer to Israel, leaving Palestinians in Gaza with little voice.

"His legitimacy was depleted long ago. He has become a liability to his own party and the Palestinians as a whole," said pollster Khalil Shikaki. An October survey found 80 per cent of West Bank and Gaza residents want Abbas to resign. Only a third support the PA administering Gaza.

Abbas' power has been further reduced since Hamas seized Gaza in 2007. His authority is now limited to West Bank population centres, constrained by Israeli control over land, economy, and movement. Security cooperation with Israel has been a cornerstone of his strategy, with the PA cracking down on militants and sharing intelligence. Yet this has reinforced perceptions of complicity and hampered popular support.

Critics say Abbas' inaction fuels Hamas' popularity. "They see Abbas is doing nothing," Shikaki said. His tight control over governance, including preventing elections or alternative leadership, has stifled political participation, especially among youth.

Despite economic and political pressures, including Israel withholding $3 billion in tax revenues, Abbas has maintained "practical realism," prioritising stability and international credibility over confrontational politics. This approach has won diplomatic recognition but failed to curb Israeli settlement expansion or advance statehood.

Recent gestures include promising elections within a year after the Gaza conflict, establishing a Palestinian-French commission to draft a new constitution, and investigating corruption within his government. Yet scepticism remains high: 60 per cent of Palestinians doubt elections will occur, and imprisoned Fatah leader Marwan Barghouti would likely win if polls were held, with Abbas trailing any Hamas candidate.

Abbas' situation underscores the PA's fragility. Analysts note Israel dictates the political reality on the ground, limiting Abbas' influence, particularly in Gaza. With rivals marginalised and the PA weakened, Palestinians face leadership paralysis amid escalating occupation and humanitarian crises.

"The U.S. and Israel do not want genuine democratisation. Any effective ruler would confront the occupation," said Ines Abdel Razak of the Palestine Institute for Public Diplomacy. Abbas' cautious approach, aimed at survival, leaves Palestinians with limited options and dim prospects for statehood.

At 90, Abbas remains a symbol of endurance but also of political stagnation, presiding over a people increasingly divided, frustrated, and without an effective voice in shaping their future. *—PTI*

Mahmoud Abbas, the world's second-oldest serving president after Cameroon's Paul Biya, has been in office for 20 years **PHOTO: ANI**

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Aficionados fret as Trump moves to 'make pasta great again'

50 per cent. Copper: 50 per cent. Cars: up to 25 per cent. But an even bigger Trump-era levy looms: 107 per cent on Italian pasta.

Mamma mia.

It started with the US Commerce Department launching what it says was a routine antidumping review, based on allegations Italian pasta makers sold product into the US at below-market prices and undercut local competitors. That has led to a threat of 92 per cent duties, which would come on top of the 15 per cent tariff President Donald Trump's administration imposed on European exports generally.

The news sent shockwaves through Italy, where 13 producers would be subject to the whopping one-two punch. They say sales in their second biggest export market would shrivel if prices to American consumers more than double. And while the measure would hardly prompt pasta shortages, it still has perplexed importers like Sal Auriemma, whose shop in Philadelphia's Italian market, Claudio Specialty Food, has been operating for over 60 years.

"Pasta is a pretty small sector to pick on. I mean, there's a lot bigger things to pick on," said Auriemma, pointing to luxury items as an alternative.

But pasta? "It's basic food," he said. "Something's got to be sacred."

PASTA ADDS HEFT TO ITALY'S ECONOMY

Italy is a nation of avid pasta eaters. Less known is that most of the tortellini, spaghetti and rigatoni its factories churn out gets sent abroad. The US accounts for about 15 per cent of its USD 4.65 billion in exports, making it Italy's largest market after Germany, data from farmers' association Coldiretti show.

The punitive pasta premium has become a cause célèbre for Italy's politicians, executives and economists. Agriculture Minister Francesco Lollobrigida told lawmakers in mid-October that the government was working with the European Commission and engaging in diplomatic efforts, while supporting the companies' legal actions to oppose US sanctions.

EU Trade Commissioner Maros Sefcovic addressed reporters in Rome last month, stressing the lack of evidence backing the US decision and calling the combined 107 per cent levy "unacceptable."

Margherita Mastromauro, president of the pasta makers sector of Unione Italiana Food, told The Associated Press that prices for Italian pasta in the US remain high, and certainly higher than American-made rivals — undermining any dumping claim.

US threatens 92 per cent duties on Italian pasta after antidumping review **PHOTO: PIXABAY**

She said that the measures could deal a fatal blow to small- and medium-sized producers. Lucio Miranda, president of consultancy group Export USA, agreed.

"A duty rate of 107 per cent would definitely kill this flow of export," Miranda, who is Italian, said by phone from New York. "It's not going to be something that you can just dump on the consumer and move on, life continues. It will definitely be a deal killer."

WACKY MAC OWNER CRIES FOUL

The Commerce Department's investigation started in 2024 after complaints from Missouri-based 8th Avenue Food & Provisions, which owns pasta brand Ronzoni, and Illinois-based Winland Foods, whose multiple brands include Prince, Mueller's and Wacky Mac.

The office's review focused on La Molisana and Garofalo, chosen as primary respondents because they are Italy's two largest exporters, the Commerce Department said in an emailed statement. Any sale price below either producers' costs or the price they charge in the Italian market would be considered dumping, in line with numerous other reviews of Italian pasta since 1996, it said.

The two companies presented information incorrectly or withheld it, significantly impeding analysis, according to the Commerce Department. And in the face of these alleged deficiencies, the office presented its 92 per cent duty estimate, which it extended to 11 other companies based on an assumption the two companies' behaviour was representative.

"After they screwed up their initial responses, the Commerce Department explained to them what the problems were and asked them to fix those problems; they didn't," White House spokesperson Kush Desai said in an emailed response to the AP's questions. "And then Commerce communicated the requirements again, and they didn't answer for a third time."

La Molisana declined to comment when contacted by the AP. Garofalo didn't respond to a request for comment.

The sanctions would be applied not just to imports going forward, but also the 12 months through June 2024, according to the Commerce Department. It added that only 16 per cent of total Italian pasta imports may be affected. Its final decision is scheduled for January 2, which could be extended by 60 days.

'SENSELESS'

A little over an hour's drive northeast from Naples is Benevento, a sleepy hilltop town of 55,000 people famed for its ancient Roman theater and Aglianico red wine. It's also home to Pasta Rummo, founded in 1846, which prides itself on its seven-phase, "slow work" production method.

CEO Cosimo Rummo is outraged by the threat to his company's annual 20 million euros in exports to the US.

"These tariffs are completely senseless," Rummo said in a phone interview. "These are fast-moving consumer goods … Who would ever buy a pack of pasta that costs 10 dollars, the same price as a bottle of wine?"

He added that he has no intention to start producing pasta stateside, as some companies have done and so would be spared the prospective levy. That includes Barilla, which for decades has been the main Italian pasta brand in the US and now has large-scale production facilities there. *—DW news*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Will pursue legal action, want $1B to $5B from BBC: Don

LONDON, 15 NOV

US President Donald Trump has confirmed his intention to pursue legal action against the BBC, even after the broadcaster apologised for editing his speech in a documentary last year. Speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One, Trump stated, "We'll sue them. We'll sue them for anywhere between a billion and 5 billion dollars, probably sometime next week," asserting that the edits misrepresented his words. The BBC, which acknowledged an "error of judgment" and has faced significant resignations, admitted its editing created a "mistaken impression" that Trump called for violence. However, it has ruled out financial compensation, emphasising its disagreement with any defamation claims. *—PTI*

Rocket attack in Damascus injures one

DAMASCUS, 15 NOV

Rockets struck a home in the Mazzeh 86 neighbourhood of Syria's capital on Friday night, injuring one woman and causing significant damage, according to state media. The assailants behind the attack remain unidentified. An Associated Press journalist at the scene reported that security forces cordoned off the area. State television confirmed the victim's injury and indicated that "unknown assailants" were responsible, adding that security forces are investigating the incident. While explosions have become relatively uncommon in Damascus in recent months, numerous blasts have followed the fall of President Bashar Assad's government in December last year. Israel has conducted hundreds of airstrikes targeting Syrian army assets since then. *—PTI*

Beijing tells citizens don't go to Japan: Taiwan row

BEIJING, 15 NOV

Chinese authorities advised citizens to avoid travel to Japan, citing security risks stemming from comments made by Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi regarding Taiwan. The Foreign Ministry stated that Takaichi's remarks had "damaged the atmosphere of mutual exchanges" and posed risks to the "lives and physical safety of Chinese nationals in Japan." Those already in Japan were urged to monitor security conditions. This advisory came after China lodged a strong protest with Japan, condemning Takaichi's statements, which were seen as a potential incitement to conflict. Prime Minister Takaichi had previously suggested that a military emergency involving Taiwan could threaten Japan's survival, aggravating tensions. *—PTI*

Tanzania Prez orders probe over election violence

DODOMA, 15 NOV

Tanzanian President Samia Suluhu Hassan announced an inquiry into the deadly unrest following her disputed re-election last month. Speaking at parliament's opening, she expressed sorrow over the violence and extended condolences to bereaved families. Following accusations of an undemocratic voting process, mass protests erupted across the nation. Hassan's government, which claims she won with nearly 98 per cent of the vote, faced backlash when many opposition leaders were barred from participation. Human rights groups have called for independent investigations into alleged government abuses, including unlawful killings. The UN's human rights chief, Volker Turk, urged the authorities to account for missing individuals, following a nationwide internet blackout during the unrest. *—ANI*

Trump drops tariffs on beef, coffee and tomatoes

Rising food prices, inflation appear to have forced his hand

WASHINGTON, 15 NOV

US President Donald Trump announced Friday that he was scrapping US tariffs on beef, coffee, tropical fruits and a broad swath of other commodities — a dramatic move that comes amid mounting pressure on his administration to better combat high consumer prices.

His abrupt retreat from his signature tariff policy on so many staples key to the American diet is significant, and it comes after voters in off-year elections this month cited economic concerns as their top issue, resulting in big wins for Democrats in Virginia, New Jersey and other key races around the country.

"We just did a little bit of a rollback on some foods like coffee," Trump said aboard Air Force One as he flew to Florida hours after the tariff announcement was made.

Pressed on his tariffs helping to increase consumer prices, Trump acknowledged, "I say they may, in some cases" have that effect.

"But to a large extent they've been borne by other countries," the President added.

The goods Trump was dropping tariffs on included, coffee, cocoa, black tea, green tea, vanilla beans and beef products

The fruits, included avocadoes, bananas, coconuts, limes, oranges, mangoes, pineapples, various peppers and tomatoes while the spices, included cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, coriander seeds, cumin seeds in addition to a variety of nuts.

Meanwhile, Inflation remains elevated, further increasing pressure on US consumers.

Most items tracked in the Department of Labour inflation report showed price increases, with groceries up 2.7 per cent from last year. *—Agencies*

Donald Trump *PHOTO: PTI*

Protesters, officers clash in Chicago

Authorities arrested 21 protesters Friday and said four officers were injured outside a Chicago-area federal immigration facility that activists say functions as a de facto detention centere and is plagued by inhumane conditions. The Cook County Sheriff's Office said the arrests were made by midday, and that it was working on verifying identities and potential charges.

JUST A SMALL HICCUP?

> We just did a little bit of a rollback on some foods... where the prices were a little bit high. Now they'll be on the low side in a very short period of time
> -Donald Trump, US President

US strike kills 4 on another 'drug' boat in the Caribbean

WASHINGTON, 15 NOV

The US military's 20th strike on a boat accused of transporting drugs has killed four people in the Caribbean Sea, a Pentagon official said Friday.

The latest strike happened Monday, according to the official. It brings the death toll from the strikes that began in September to 80.

US President Donald Trump, meanwhile told reporters that he's "sort of made up my mind" about whether the US will take military action against Venezuela, as the nations most advanced aircraft carrier was set to arrive near the country soon. *—PTI*

Red Cross convoy carries the body of a person believed to be a deceased hostage handed over by Hamas militants *PHOTO: PTI*

Plan is for Palestinian statehood: US tells UN

UNITED NATIONS, 15 NOV

The US circulated a second revision of its draft resolution on Gaza at the UN Security Council (UNSC) on Thursday, while as Russia countered with its own text calling for the preservation of the current ceasefire and a renewed commitment to a two-state solution.

The US document, supported Qatar, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Pakistan, Jordan and Turkey, noted that the process "offers a pathway to Palestinian self-determination and statehood," but requires a strong transitional authority meant to be headed by US President Donald Trump and asks the UN to lay out options for an international stabilisation force.

The international stabilisation force in Gaza has a wide mandate, including overseeing the borders, providing security and demilitarising the territory.

However, Russia's rival draft resolution includes stronger language supporting Palestinian statehood alongside Israel and stressing that the West Bank and Gaza must be joined as a state under the Palestinian Authority.

The latest US draft and the Russian proposal are both expected to be put up for a vote early next week. *—Agencies*

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT: LAHORE HC JUDGE RESIGNS

LAHORE, 15 NOV

A judicial crisis has escalated in Pakistan as Justice Shams Mehmood Mirza of the Lahore High Court became the first high court judge to resign in protest against the controversial 27th Constitutional Amendment. This follows the resignations of two Supreme Court judges, Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice Athar Minallah, who condemned the amendment as an "affront to the judiciary and the 1973 Constitution."

The amendment establishes a Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) to oversee constitutional matters, relegating the Supreme Court to handle only civil and criminal cases. Justice Shah described the change as a "grave assault on the Constitution," arguing that it dismantles the Supreme Court, subjugates the judiciary to executive control, and undermines constitutional democracy.

The amendment also allows Army Chief Gen Asim Munir to remain in office until 2030 as Chief of Defence Forces (CDF). The International Commission of Jurists has denounced the 27th Amendment as a "flagrant attack" on judicial independence. *—PTI*

Sudanese army is lying: UAE denies role in funding war

A refugee camp for Sudanese people who evacuated el-Fasher after the paramilitary Rapid Support Group seized the city last month *PHOTO: X @UNRELIEFCHIEF*

GENEVA, 15 NOV

The UAE said that the Sudanese Armed Forces are spreading false and unfounded allegations against it, as the Arab nation has been facing increasing criticism for allegedly funding the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Sudan. The RSF has allegedly committed numerous war crimes in the ongoing war in Sudan.

''Instead of directing their efforts toward ending the civil war they ignited, they are devoting their efforts towards misleading disinformation campaigns to prolong the conflict,'' said Jamal Al Musharakh, Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations and other international organisations in Geneva.

He said that the United Nations reports document war crimes and horrific violations of international law committed by both the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces.

''The Sudanese Armed Forces rejected the humanitarian truce, in spite of the intensive efforts implemented by the US, as part of the Quad - supported by the UAE - which could have prevented the recent escalation in el-Fasher and allowed the delivery of humanitarian aid,' he further emphasised.

The RSF recently seized el-Fasher the last provincial capital in Darfur after a nearly 18-month long siege.

Meanwhile, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio called UAE's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan and urged them to commit to a humanitarian ceasefire.

The UN has also ordered a probe into the alleged war crimes committed in el-Fasher. *—Agencies*

Thai army patrol the border with Cambodia, where a landmine recently injured a soldier *PHOTO: FB/ROYAL THAI ARMY*

'Thai, Cambodia ceasefire is intact'

WASHINGTON, 15 NOV

- Territorial disputes led to five days of armed conflict in late July that killed dozens of people. Trump then said he brokered a ceasefire, which appeared to collapse recently over similar border tensions

President Donald Trump said Friday that he had successfully eased hostilities between Cambodia and Thailand, saying that he'd been able to preserve a previous, US and Malaysia-brokered ceasefire that had appeared to be breaking down.

"I stopped a war just today," Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One as he flew to his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida for the weekend. Trump said he used tariff threats on the countries to leverage peace.

Trump said he'd spoken to the Prime Ministers of both countries by phone and now, "They're doing great. They were not doing great."

He said the conversations left him believing, "I think they're going to be fine."

Territorial disputes led to five days of armed conflict in late July that killed dozens of people.

Trump threatened to withhold trade privileges from the two countries unless they stopped fighting, helping to broker a temporary halt to the conflict. However, the ceasefire seemed on the verge of collapse this week when Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet said a villager was killed after shooting broke out along his country's border with Thailand. *—PTI*

AFTER NEW DOCUS RELEASED

Trump orders probe into Clinton-Epstein ties

NEW YORK, 15 NOV

Acceding to President Donald Trump's demands, US Attorney General Pam Bondi said Friday that she has ordered a top federal prosecutor to investigate sex offender Jeffrey Epstein's ties to Trump political foes, including former president Bill Clinton.

Bondi posted on X that she was assigning Manhattan US Attorney Jay Clayton to lead the probe, capping an eventful week in which congressional Republicans released nearly 23,000 pages of documents from Epstein's estate and House Democrats seized on emails mentioning Trump.

Hours before Bondi's announcement, Trump posted on his Truth Social platform that he would ask her, the Justice Department and the FBI to investigate Epstein's "involvement and relationship" with Clinton and others, including former Treasury Secretary Larry Summers and LinkedIn founder and Democratic donor Reid Hoffman.

Trump, who was friends with Epstein for years, didn't explain what supposed crimes he wanted the Justice Department to investigate. None of the men he mentioned in a social media post demanding the probe has been accused of sexual misconduct by any of Epstein's victims.

Trump, calling the matter "the Epstein Hoax, involving Democrats, not Republicans," said the investigation should also include financial giant JPMorgan Chase, which provided banking services to Epstein.

Among the people accused of being tied to Epstein is Indian Union Minister for Petroleum Hardeep Singh Puri, who was invited to interact with the convicted sex trafficker according to documents released US Oversight House Committee on Wednesday.

Notably, the documents claim that Trump was aware of Epstein's sex-trafficking and had interacted with a victim, something the President has long denied having any knowledge of. *—Agencies*

US President Donald Trump with former president Bill Clinton at a tennis event in 2000 *PHOTO: X*

Trump cuts off Marjorie Taylor Greene over Epstein push

Trump has publicly called it quits with one of his most stalwart MAGA-world supporters, calling Rep Marjorie Taylor Greene "'Wacky' Marjorie" and saying he would endorse a challenger against her in next year's midterms "if the right person runs." However, the Georgia Republican countered, saying that she was being targeted because she was pushing for the release of the "Epstein files"

Russia has been increasing military pressure on Pokrovsk, which it believes is the gateway into Ukraine *PHOTO: X @CinC_AFU*

UKRAINE HITS NOVOROSSIYSK OIL HUB, AS RUSSIA PUSHES INTO POKROVSK

KYIV, 15 NOV

Ukraine launched an overnight strike on a significant oil terminal in the Russian port city of Novorossiysk, igniting a fire and damaging critical infrastructure. Officials from both nations confirmed the attack on one of Russia's largest oil export facilities, underscoring Kyiv's intensified efforts to undermine a key source of war revenue for Moscow.

Ukraine's General Staff reported damage to "valuable" infrastructure at both the port and the oil terminal, including a launcher from Russia's S-400 air defence system. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy acknowledged the use of domestically produced long-range Neptune missiles but did not specify the target locations. "This is our entirely justified response to the ongoing terror," said Zelenskyy.

Ukraine also targeted Sheskharis, Russia claimed, adding that it defended the drone strikes. Sheskharis is one of the largest oil loading complexes for the transhipment of oil and oil products in the south of Russia.

Meanwhile, the General Staff of Ukraine's Armed Forces said on Saturday that Ukrainian troops have engaged in 256 "combat clashes" with invading Russian troops.

Over 100 of those gun battles took place in eastern Ukraine's Pokrovsk, which Russia views as a gateway to the remaining unoccupied strategically important Donetsk. *—ANI*

PHOTO: X

Reliance HR Chief named among world's top CHROs

NEW DELHI, 15 NOV

Reliance Industries Ltd's Human Resources chief Ira Bindra has been named among the world's top CHROs, making Reliance the only Indian company represented on the list. N2Growth, a global leader in executive search and leadership advisory, announced the 2025 Leaders40 Top Chief Human Resources Officers (CHRO) Award on Friday. Reliance is the only Indian firm on the list and Bindra the first Indian woman executive of an Indian firm to be featured on the list. She has been ranked 28th on the list. Previously, she spent 19 years with General Electric, holding diverse HR leadership roles across Healthcare, Oil & Gas, Technology Infrastructure, Corporate and GE Capital in both developed and developing markets. *—PTI*

'India's gems & jewellery exports fall by 31% in Oct'

MUMBAI, 15 NOV

India's gems and jewellery exports declined by 30.57 per cent in October to $2,168.05 million (Rs 19,172.890 crore) compared to the same period of previous year, according to industry body GJEPC. The overall exports of the sector stood at $3,122.52 million in October 2024, showed the data released by the Gems and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC). However, he added that in November the exports are expected to pick up again as the Chinese markets are slowly recovering and there will be Christmas demand in other key markets. Exports of cut and polished diamonds witnessed a decline of 26.97 per cent at $1,025.99 million in October compared to $1,404.85 million recorded in the same period of previous year. *—PTI*

EaseMyTrip sustains strong momentum in Q2

NEW DELHI, 15 NOV

Easy Trip Planners, announced its Q2 FY26 financial results on Friday. According to company information, it provides a wide range of travel-related products and services, catering to both domestic and international travellers. With innovative tools and comprehensive information, it empowers customers to seamlessly research, plan, and book their travel needs. Expanding beyond air travel, the company offers services in hotels, holidays, and bus/train/cab/cruise/charter bookings along with other ancillary services, further enhancing its global presence and establishing itself as a one stop travel solution, while continuing to serve millions of satisfied customers. *—PTI*

A-1 Ltd board nods 3:1 bonus issue, stock split plan

NEW DELHI, 15 NOV

Chemical trading and logistics company A-1 Ltd on Saturday said its board has approved a bonus issue of shares as well as a 10:1 stock split to improve liquidity and make shares more affordable. The company in a statement said that its board has approved an issue of bonus shares in the ratio of 3:1 -- three bonus equity shares for every one equity share held by the shareholders. The board also recommended sub-division of 1 equity share of face value of Rs 10 each fully paid-up into 10 equity shares of face value of Rs 1 each fully paid-up held by the shareholders. A proposal to increase the authorised share capital of the company from Rs 20 crore to Rs 46 crore, subject to the approval of shareholders, was also cleared by the board, the company said. *—PTI*

'Andhra secures ₹5.2L cr energy investment in 2 days'

Deals to boost green hydrogen, biofuel efforts in the state

VISAKHAPATNAM/NEW DELHI, 15 NOV

Andhra Pradesh Energy Minister G Ravi Kumar announced that the state secured investment commitments worth Rs 5.2 lakh crore with the potential to create more than 2.6 lakh jobs, across the energy sector in just two days.

Spanning renewable energy, green hydrogen, pumped storage, biofuels, manufacturing, and hybrid RE projects, the minister in a release on Friday said these pledges were made on 13 and 14 November, the inaugural day of the 30th CII Partnership Summit in Visakhapatnam.

According to Kumar, the investment pledges reflect a decisive shift in investor confidence, reinforcing Andhra Pradesh's position as India's fastest-growing clean energy and green hydrogen hub.

Andhra government and the WEF signed an agreement to establish a Centre for Energy and Cyber Resilience PHOTO: X

REALTY FIRM TO INVEST RS 4,500 CR

Realty company Anant Raj Ltd will invest Rs 4,500 crore in Andhra Pradesh to set up data centres as part of its expansion plan.

In a regulatory filing on Saturday, the company said that its subsidiary Anant Raj Cloud Pvt Ltd (ARCPL) has entered into an MoU with Andhra Pradesh Economic Development Board for building new data centre facilities along with IT Park in Andhra Pradesh and to make investment for development of data centre and cloud services.

QUANTUM TRAINING

Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Saturday said Andhra Pradesh Skill Development Corporation has partnered with three organisations — Washington Institute for STEM, Entrepreneurship & Research (WISER), Qubitech Smart Solutions, and QKrishi Quantum — to strengthen the state's Quantum Technology talent pipeline.

CENTRE FOR ENERGY & CYBER RESILIENCE

The Andhra Pradesh government and the World Economic Forum on Saturday signed an agreement to establish a Centre for Energy and Cyber Resilience on the final day of the 30th CII Partnership Summit here.

5 UNITS IN SRI CITY, 12 PROJECTS

Naidu on Saturday virtually inaugurated five industrial units in Sri City, and witnessed the signing of agreements for 12 more projects worth over Rs 2,300 crore at the 30th CII Partnership Summit here. The upcoming projects spanning the sectors of engineering, food processing and pharmaceuticals are expected to create 12,365 jobs.

RAYMOND GROUP PROJECTS

Naidu on Saturday virtually laid the foundation stone for three Raymond Group projects worth Rs 1,201 crore on the final day of the 30th CII Partnership Summit. *—PTI*

REMOVE DATA AFTER 3 YEARS

DPDP rules set strict obligations for companies

NEW DELHI, 14 NOV

The newly issued Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Rules set out strict and clearly defined timelines that companies must follow when collecting, storing, or processing personal data.

Firms are required to promptly inform both affected users and the Data Protection Board in the event of a data breach, with an initial alert issued immediately and a comprehensive report submitted within 72 hours. Users must also be notified at least 48 hours before their personal data is erased, giving them the opportunity to log in or exercise their rights.

E-commerce platforms, online gaming companies, and social media firms must delete personal data after three years of user inactivity, except in two specified circumstances. Consent managers are required to retain records of user consents for at least seven years.

The rules come into force in a staggered manner. The Data Protection Board is to be constituted immediately, while the consent manager framework will become operational within 12 months. All remaining compliance obligations including user notices, security safeguards, and breach reporting will apply after an 18-month transition period. Regardless of category, all companies must retain personal data and associated logs for at least one year from the date of processing.

Data fiduciaries must adopt strong security measures such as encryption, masking, and access monitoring to prevent unauthorised use.

They must publish the contact details of their Data Protection Officer or an authorised representative on their website or app.

Significant Data Fiduciaries face additional obligations, including annual audits and impact assessments. They must ensure that certain categories of personal and traffic data, as designated by the government, are not transferred outside India. *—PTI*

'All possibilities on table': Goyal on Canada FTA

VISAKHAPATNAM, 15 NOV

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has reiterated India's openness to resuming negotiations for a free trade agreement (FTA) with Canada, stating, "All possibilities are on the table."

Following the two rounds of discussions with Canada's Minister of Export Promotion, Maninder Sidhu, Goyal expressed optimism about enhancing bilateral cooperation and strategic partnerships.

These talks come amid the backdrop of Canada's decision to pause FTA negotiations in 2023 due to strained relations.

During their recent meeting at the CII Partnership Summit 2025, Goyal and Sidhu explored various areas of collaboration, including supply chain resilience. Goyal noted, "We are trying to bridge that gap," referring to proposals aimed at boosting the production in Special Economic Zones (SEZs).

Piyush Goyal PHOTO: PTI

Simultaneously, Goyal affirmed India's readiness to lead reforms at the World Trade Organization (WTO), emphasising the need for a consensus-driven agenda that represents developing nations.

The discussions with WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala signalled India's commitment to addressing critical issues, including public stockholding and the dispute resolution mechanism, ahead of the 14th Ministerial Conference in Cameroon. *—PTI*

MARGIN OF 17–18%

Tier-2 tech firms drive Q2 IT revamp

NEW DELHI, 15 NOV

The Indian IT sector returned to positive sequential growth in Q2FY26, with Tier-1 technology companies reversing the declines seen over the previous two quarters, while Tier-2 firms continued to outperform in both growth and profitability, according to a sector update by Axis Capital.

The report noted that Tier-1 players such as Infosys and Wipro delivered results largely in line with expectations, whereas Tech Mahindra posted a slight upside surprise. Among Tier-2 companies, Coforge and Persistent Systems recorded the strongest sequential growth, and BPO-focused firms including eClerx and Sagility maintained steady performance.

In the engineering, research and development (ER&D) segment, Tata Technologies delivered a positive surprise, driven by strong traction in its non-automotive business. However, the broader ER&D space continued to face headwinds due to persistent weakness in automotive demand.

PHOTO: ANI

Margins improved across the industry, supported by favorable currency movements, delayed wage hikes and the absence of seasonal costs. Offshore-centric BPO firms recorded the sharpest margin gains, while most ER&D companies, except Tata Technologies, underperformed due to softer growth. HCLTech maintained an EBIT margin of 17–18 per cent, Infosys held steady at 20–22 per cent, and Sagility slightly upgraded its adjusted EBITDA outlook after a strong first half.

Hiring trends also improved modestly in Q2, signaling early signs of stabilising demand.

Excluding TCS, Tier-1 firms saw sequential increases in headcount, led by Cognizant with 6,000 additions and Infosys with 8,200 — its highest rise since Q2FY23. The report added that Gen-AI-related spending may offer near-term opportunities and support a gradual recovery in the business cycle. *—ANI*

FM unveils 9 bank branches and initiatives in NE

KIPHIRE, 15 NOV

Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman inaugurated nine bank branches across the Northeast during a virtual credit outreach programme in Kiphire, Nagaland, on Friday. The newly opened branches comprise SBI Alongmen and SBI Yikhum in Nagaland; Nagaland Rural Bank in Wakching; and several SBI branches in Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, and Assam.

Sitharaman handed over sanction letters totalling Rs 28.02 crore to 350 beneficiaries under various Central government schemes. She flagged off vehicles under the Chief Minister's Micro Finance Initiative (CMMFI) and launched a mobile ATM van of Nagaland Rural Bank.

She commended the preservation of Naga culture and praised the potential for socio-economic growth in Kiphire, citing its rich mineral resources. "The Northeast continues to receive priority for all-round development," she affirmed.

During her visit, Sitharaman also inaugurated a new Industrial Training Institute campus and participated in local initiatives, reaffirming the government's commitment to development in the region. *—PTI*

Venezuela seeks stronger ties with India, eyes rare earth minerals deal

VISAKHAPATNAM, 15 NOV

Venezuela has expressed a strong desire to bolster cooperation with India in the critical minerals sector and attract investments, the Ministry of Commerce announced on Saturday. This discussion took place during a meeting between India's Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and Venezuela's Minister of Ecological Mining Development, Hector Silva, held in Visakhapatnam.

"During the meeting, the Venezuelan side expressed interest in expanding economic engagement with India beyond the oil sector, including cooperation in critical

minerals and attracting Indian investment," the ministry stated. Goyal underscored the importance of reviving the India-Venezuela Joint Committee Mechanism, which last convened a decade ago. He noted that ONGC's ongoing operations in Venezuela present opportunities for deeper collaboration in mining and exploration.

Additionally, he urged Venezuela to consider recognising the Indian Pharmacopeia to facilitate pharmaceutical trade and highlighted potential synergies in the automobile sector.

In a separate development, the ministry revealed that the National Industrial Corridor Development Corporation Limited, Logistics Data Services Limited, and the Andhra Pradesh government have signed a memorandum of understanding to digitise the logistics landscape in Andhra Pradesh, aiming to improve efficiency and coordination through an integrated digital platform providing real-time information on logistics operations. *—PTI*

MFIs urged to rebuild credibility for growth

KOLKATA, 15 NOV

Microfinance institutions (MFIs) must rebuild credibility and confidence to secure sustainable growth, a joint study by PwC and Sa-Dan, the sector's self-regulatory body, has warned.

The report notes that microfinance, traditionally founded on trust between borrowers, field officers and lenders, has become increasingly transactional. Major shocks such as demonetisation and the Covid-19 pandemic have weakened group culture, leading to poorer repayment discipline and declining public confidence.

The study highlights that MFIs have also seen reduced support from external stakeholders, including investors and refinancing agencies, due to heightened caution around bottom-of-the-pyramid borrowers. To regain trust, it stresses the need to empower customers through stronger financial literacy. Workshops, training sessions and boot camps are recommended to ensure borrowers understand their rights, responsibilities and the products offered.

Lenders are urged to maintain fairness, clarity and consistency across their communications, recovery practices and customer support. Rising over-indebtedness and the challenge of balancing growth with portfolio quality pose significant long-term risks to the sector. *—PTI*

END OF AN ERA?

Apple quietly prepares for life after Tim Cook

CALIFORNIA, 15 NOV

Apple is quietly laying the groundwork for a post-**Tim Cook** era, and with the spotlight now on John Ternus, Apple's senior vice-president of Hardware Engineering, said sources.

According to a recent Financial Times report, Apple's board has accelerated its CEO succession discussions, which is a clear signal that it is weighing leadership beyond Cook, who turned 65 this year.

Ternus, Apple's Senior Vice President of Hardware Engineering, has emerged as the front-runner.

He is not a household name, but within Cupertino, he is among the most respected executives.

He oversees the hardware engineering teams behind the iPhone, iPad, Mac, AirPods, and other key product lines — all central to Apple's revenue. Since joining Apple in 2001, Ternus has been a steady hand, rising through the ranks and intimately involved in major transitions, including Apple's shift to its own Apple Silicon chips.

Having joined Apple in 2001, Ternus, with his deep technical expertise, institutional knowledge, and operational experience, seems well placed to be that person.

But the stakes are high — the future Apple CEO must steer the company through a sophisticated technology landscape, while preserving the innovation and discipline that have defined Cook's era.

Tim Cook PHOTO: PTI

While Cook has not publicly commented on stepping down, the board members are under pressure to ensure continuity amid slowing growth, rising regulatory challenges, and Apple's rapidly deepening bet on artificial intelligence.

Sources says that Apple's board does not intend to make any public announcement before the company reports its January quarter earnings.

That timing is deliberate as making a leadership change during the iPhone launch season could distract from the financial results and dilute the focus on Apple's performance.

Tim Cook has left a lasting legacy at Apple.

He did not just inherit Steve Jobs's role — he stabilised the company, scaled operations, strengthened Apple's services ecosystem, and pushed it past the trillion-dollar valuation milestone.

Any successor will inherit more than just the CEO's title; they will be expected to sustain and build on the momentum that Cook has established. *—Agencies*

Warren Buffett's Berkshire buys $4.9B Alphabet stake

WASHINGTON, 15 NOV

Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway Inc. has purchased 17.9 million shares of Google parent Alphabet Inc. in the third quarter, according to a recent regulatory filing. This acquisition comes as Buffett, 95, prepares to step down as CEO after a remarkable 60-year tenure.

In a disclosure filed with the US Securities and Exchange Commission on Friday, Berkshire revealed it owned 17.85 million Alphabet shares as of 30 September, valued at $4.9 billion based on Friday's market close.

Simultaneously, Berkshire has reduced its stake in Apple Inc., cutting its holdings from 280 million shares to 238.2 million.

Warren Buffett PHOTO: ANI

Despite this reduction, Apple remains Berkshire's largest stock holding, valued at $60.7 billion, accounting for nearly a quarter of the conglomerate's equity portfolio.

Berkshire also sold 37.2 million shares of Bank of America, now holding a 7.7 per cent stake in the financial firm, which is still its third-largest stock holding. Additionally, the company has exited its position in US home builder DR. Horton Inc.

Buffett has been actively seeking opportunities to utilise Berkshire's record cash reserves of $382 billion, recently agreeing to acquire Occidental Petroleum Corp.'s petrochemical unit for $9.7 billion, alongside a $1.6 billion stake in UnitedHealth Group Inc. *—Agencies*

8-team Women's Emerging Nations Trophy launched by ICC

BANGKOK, 15 NOV

Following the resounding success of the Women's World Cup in India, the ICC on Saturday launched a new eight-team global tournament to "promote and expand women's cricket around the world".

The inaugural edition, to be held in Bangkok from November 20 to 30, will be called the ICC Women's Emerging Nations Trophy and will be part of a new three-tier development pathway designed to offer high-performance exposure to upcoming cricketing nations.

The eight competing teams are: Thailand, the Netherlands, Papua New Guinea, the United Arab Emirates, Scotland, Namibia, Tanzania, and Uganda.

The Women's ODI World Cup, which concluded recently with India lifting its maiden trophy by defeating South Africa in the final, set a new benchmark in women's cricket, with the tournament reaching more than 500 million viewers across the country and a significant growth in viewership across the globe.

"Nearly 300,000 fans attended matches across India and (co-host) Sri Lanka, and the event concluded with India becoming the first Asian team to lift the Women's Cricket World Cup. —*PTI*

KEY TOURNAMENT DETAILS AT A GLANCE

Here are the main facts about the ICC Women's Emerging Nations Trophy 2025:

- Tournament Name: ICC Women's Emerging Nations Trophy 2025
- Organizer: International Cricket Council (ICC)
- Edition: 1st (inaugural/first edition)
- Dates: 20 November – 30 November 2025
- Format: 28 T20 matches, round-robin
- Host Country / Venue: Thailand (Bangkok)
- Number of Teams: 8 teams

1st Test: Jadeja runs riot as SA collapse to 93/7

Gill stretchered out with neck injury; just bad timing: Morkel

KOLKATA, 15 NOV

The nightmare of facing Ravindra Jadeja on an Eden Gardens track, deteriorating between deliveries, turned into a reality for the South African batters as India closed in on victory by the end of the second day in the opening Test.

At stumps, Jadeja's 4 for 27 in 13 overs saw South Africa in tatters at 93 for 7 with an overall lead of 63. Skipper Temba Bavuma (29 batting off 78 balls) was waging a lone battle, but to even fight on the third day, which will certainly be the last of this game, South Africa will need at least 125 runs, which looks improbable at the moment.

Once Jadeja came into the attack, Rishabh Pant, the very vocal and amusing stand-in skipper, who till then was giving instructions to Axar Patel and Kuldeep Yadav, was heard saying on the stump microphone: "Jaddu bhai, aap dekh lena," an ample indication that the master craftsman need not be told what ought to be done.

If Simon Harmer's classical off-spin had brought South Africa back into the contest earlier in the day, Jadeja was always going to be a resident menace on a crumbling surface with his immaculate length and ability to attack the stumps, letting the surface take care of the rest.

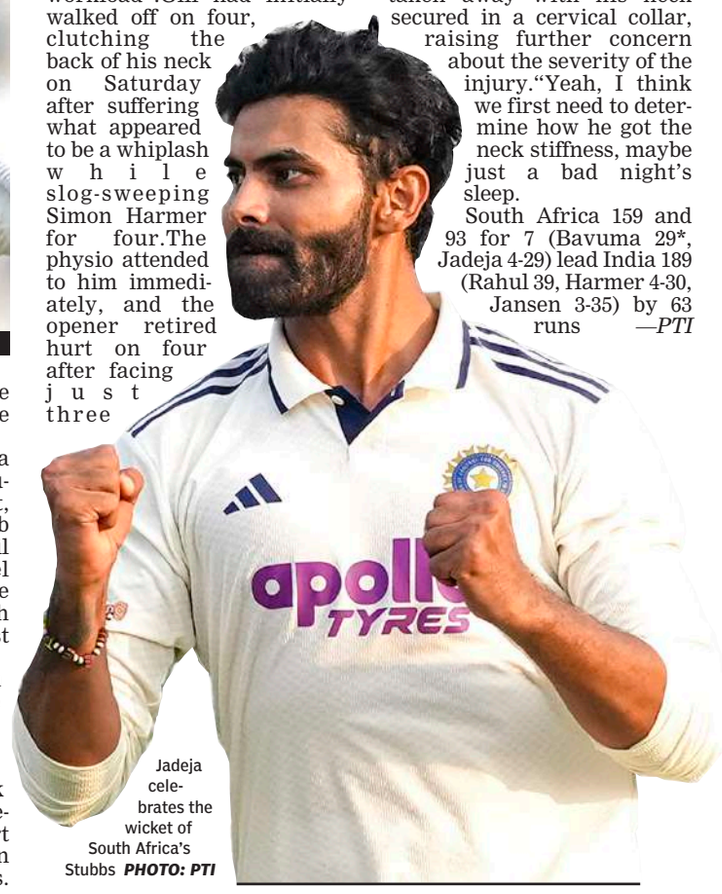
Shubman Gill *PHOTO: PTI*

Earlier in the day, Jadeja had contributed a valuable 27 with the bat, entering the elite club of Ian Botham, Kapil Dev, and Daniel Vettori as only the fourth cricketer with the double of 4000 Test runs and 300 wickets.

India skipper Shubman Gill's availability for the remainder of the opening Test is in serious doubt after he was stretchered into an ambulance with his neck immobilised on Saturday evening, hours after retiring hurt during India's first innings on day two at the Eden Gardens.

South Africa assistant coach Morne Morkel blamed it on a bad night's "sleep and not his workload".Gill had initially walked off on four, clutching the back of his neck on Saturday after suffering what appeared to be a whiplash while slog-sweeping Simon Harmer for four.The physio attended to him immediately, and the opener retired hurt on four after facing just three balls.But the situation seemed more concerning later on Saturday as he was seen being taken away with his neck secured in a cervical collar, raising further concern about the severity of the injury."Yeah, I think we first need to determine how he got the neck stiffness, maybe just a bad night's sleep.

South Africa 159 and 93 for 7 (Bavuma 29*, Jadeja 4-29) lead India 189 (Rahul 39, Harmer 4-30, Jansen 3-35) by 63 runs —*PTI*



Jadeja celebrates the wicket of South Africa's Stubbs *PHOTO: PTI*

FIDE WORLD CUP

Grandmaster Arjun Erigaisi and Levon Aronian *PHOTO: PTI*

Arjun storms into quarterfinals

PANAJI, 15 NOV

Grandmaster Arjun Erigaisi stormed into the quarterfinals of the FIDE World Cup, defeating two-time winner Levon Aronian of the United States in the second game of the round of 16 here on Saturday.

Arjun was in control throughout, and the fact that his victory came with black pieces speaks volumes about the resilience of the Indian to adapt to different situations in quick time.

Having drawn the first game under classical time control against someone who has been in peak form recently, Arjun was simply at his best in the return game with the black pieces, getting the position to his liking.

As far as the opening went, the Indian made it clear that the first drawn game with the slightly favourable colour had little impact on him.

The Italian Opening has been under scrutiny at the World Cup, and Saturday was no exception.

The middlegame featured a routine pawn structure, but Arjun was the first to break through in the centre, creating an uneven pawn formation with his knights prowling for kingside damage.

Aronian, generally a cool customer and until recently in fine form, lost his composure for the first time in the event as he found himself saddled with a difficult position to defend. As is often the case in such situations, the Armenian-turned-American ran out of ideas, and his 28th move was a testament to that.

Arjun's next move, a pleasing-to-the-eye knight sacrifice, proved to be the final nail, leaving the Indian just three match wins away from annexing the World Cup.

On a day when Grandmaster P Harikrishna played out his second draw on the trot with Jose Eduardo Matinez Alcantara of Mexico, Nodirbek Yakubboev of Uzbekistan cemented his place in the last eight at the expense of Gabriel Sargissian of Armenia. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

ISSF Worlds: Indian shooters miss out on medals

CAIRO, 15 NOV

Indian shooters could not secure any medal in the 25m standard pistol event, with Olympian Gurpreet Singh finishing ninth at the ISSF World Championship here on Saturday. China's Yao Qianxun continued her impressive run, picking up her third individual gold medal to go along with the 10m air pistol mixed team gold and a silver in the 25m sports pistol event at the Olympic Shooting Range. Adrian Schaub of Switzerland became the world champion in the men's category. India remained in third position behind China and South Korea in the medals tally with three gold, five silver, and four bronze medals, while China has 12 golds, seven silver, and two bronze, and Korea has racked up seven gold.—*PTI*

Chikka, Sandhu slip down in Taiwan

TAIPEI, 15 NOV

Indian duo of S Chikkarangappa and Ajeetesh Sandhu slipped down the leaderboard on the third day of the USD 400,000 Taiwan Glass Taifong Open here on Saturday.Chikka (76), who was in the Top-10 after two rounds, is now T-32, while Sandhu (72) dropped from T-18 to T-22.Among other Indians, Khalin Joshi (73) is T-44, Viraj Madappa (76) is T-57, as is Pukhraj Singh Gill (75).At the top, local hero Hung Chien-yao was leading by one shot over the fast-charging Thai Ekpharit Wu, who made a hole-in-one and an eagle, in his 66.Chinese Taipei's Hung shot a two-under-par 70 to move to 16-under for the tournament.—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

No frustration at all: Mumbai batter Sarfaraz Khan

MUMBAI, 15 NOV

India and Mumbai batter Sarfaraz Khan on Saturday said he isn't "frustrated at all" about not scoring as heavily this season as he usually does in domestic cricket, adding that there is nothing he needs to change in his batting. With his omission from the Indian Test side in the background, Sarfaraz has endured a tough Ranji Trophy season so far, managing only 111 runs in four matches at 22.20 and without a single score of fifty. The right-hander batter's returns are indeed low for the lofty standards he has set in the Ranji Trophy in the seasons preceding his India Test call-up. He made 556 runs in the 2022-23 season in six matches at 92.66, piled up as many as 982 runs in the 2021-22 season at 122.75 in six matches.—*PTI*

Ryan named in India squad for AFC Qualifiers vs B'desh

NEW DELHI, 15 NOV

Australia-born forward Ryan Williams, who recently obtained an Indian passport, has been named in the 23-member Indian football squad for the upcoming AFC Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2027 Qualifiers Final Round Group C match against Bangladesh in Dhaka on 18 November. The Blue Tigers, who had been camping in Bengaluru since November 6, will arrive in Dhaka on Saturday evening. While forward Williams will travel to Bangladesh, his inclusion in the matchday squad is subject to the receipt of a No-Objection Certificate from Football Australia and the subsequent approvals from FIFA and AFC.—*PTI*

BILLIE JEAN KING CUP QUALIFIERS

Slovenia dismantles India

BENGALURU, 15 NOV

India's Shrivalli Bhamidipati and Sahaja Yamalapalli stretched their opponents but did not have the tools to cross the line as Slovenia took a 2-0 lead to advance to the Billie Jean King Cup Qualifiers from Group G here on Saturday.

Shrivalli fought hard for 2 hours and 19 minutes but eventually went down 3-6, 6-,4 1-6 against Tamara Zidansek.

Sahaja had her moments against Kaja Juan, but the latter scored a 6-4, 6-2 win to give the visitors an unassailable lead. Shrivalli, who entered the court first, appeared a bit nervous as Zidansek quickly constructed a 4-0 lead through a combination of well-placed ground shots and precise serves. But a hold in the fifth game and followed by a break in the sixth boosted the Indian's confidence, narrowing the lead to 5-3.But the Slovenian put a lot of pressure on the Indian's serve in the ninth game, and a wayward forehand helped the former to clinch the first set.

The 23-year-old broke her opponent in the first game itself, and then saved three break points in her own serve to take a 2-0 lead, which she swelled into 4-1 with a break in the fifth game.A break in the eighth game and a hold in the next helped Zidansek reduce the deficit to 5-4.

Just when it appeared that the Slovenian was mounting a fight back, Shrivalli produced a commanding service game and an exquisite forehand down the line winner to close out the second set. Zidansek appeared a lot more refreshed after a short break ahead of the third set. —*PTI*

Rory McIlroy shares lead in Dubai

DUBAI, 15 NOV

Rory McIlroy emerged from a wild afternoon at the DP World Tour Championship with three birdies over his last five holes Saturday for a 4-under 68, giving him a share of the lead with Rasmus Neergaard-Petersen of Denmark as he closes in on a fourth straight Race to Dubai title.

The final hour at the Jumeirah Golf Estates featured an eight-way tie for the lead at one point.

Nicolai Hojgaard started the third round with the lead, and his twin brother became one of the leaders by the afternoon.

When the third round ended, McIlroy and Neergaard-Peterson (68) were at 13-under 203, one shot clear of Tyrrell Hatton and five other players. Hatton is the only player with a mathematical chance of catching McIlroy in the Race to Dubai, though it would require a collapse by the Masters champion on the Earth course, where McIlroy is defending champion and has three titles.

"It would be an amazing way to end the season," McIlroy said, who is coming off a tie for third in Abu Dhabi last week to strengthen his position at the top. —*PTI*

SINNER REACHED ATP FINALS C'SHIP MATCH

TURIN, 15 NOV

Jannik Sinner has done his part. Now it's up to Carlos Alcaraz to win one more match and set up another important final against his biggest rival. Sinner beat Alex de Minaur 7-5, 6-2 on Saturday improving to 13-0 against the Australian to reach the championship match of the ATP Finals before his home fans.

The second-ranked Sinner is aiming to defend his title in the season-ending tournament for the year's top eight players. —*PTI*

IPL player retention: Major trades and team overhauls ahead of auction

DUBAI, 15 NOV

High-profile swaps, the release of expensive assets, and a clear shift towards phasing out ageing stars emerged as the dominant themes at the end of the Indian Premier League's player-retention deadline on Saturday afternoon.

The day began with confirmation of two significant trades: the much-anticipated Ravindra Jadeja–Sanju Samson swap between Chennai Super Kings (CSK) and Rajasthan Royals (RR),

and Mohammed Shami's all-cash transfer from Sunrisers Hyderabad to Lucknow Super Giants (LSG).By late afternoon, once teams submitted their retention lists, it became clear that both CSK and Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) coming off disappointing IPL 2025 campaigns had opted for sweeping changes.

CSK, having traded out Jadeja (₹14 crore) and Sam Curran (₹2.40 crore) in exchange for Samson (₹18 crore), proceeded to release a string of Indian and overseas names to build a sizeable auction purse of ₹43.40 crore for the 16 December auction in Abu Dhabi. —*PTI*

WORLD BOXING CUP FINALS

Indian's will look to end the season on a high note

GREATER NOIDA, 15 NOV

Indian boxers will look to end the season on a high while also targeting valuable ranking points when they step into the ring at the World Boxing Cup Finals beginning here on Sunday.

With World Boxing taking over as the international governing body of the sport, it introduced the World Boxing Cup series earlier this year, culminating in the Finals. Boxers earn ranking points across all major tournaments, which play a role in determining the seedings.

With the Asian Games and Commonwealth Games scheduled next year, these points become critical.

As per the format, medallists from the three World Boxing Cups held earlier this year, along with top-ranked pugilists, qualify for the Finals.

However, as hosts, India has been granted entries in all 20 weight categories across men and women.

Two-time world champion Nikhat Zareen (51kg) headlines the women's squad. The Telangana boxer, whose only international outing this year was a quarterfinal finish at the World Championships, will look to regain rhythm.

Nikhat Zareen *PHOTO: PTI*

Reigning world champions Jaismine Lamboria (57kg) and Minakshi Hooda (48kg), along with world medallist Pooja Rani (80kg) and Nupur Sheoran (+80kg), will aim to maintain their strong form.

Preeti Pawar (54kg) and Arundhati Chaudhary (70kg) return to the national fold, as does Parveen Hooda (60kg), who had been suspended for failing to report her whereabouts, and all will hope to make an impact against a fairly strong field. —*PTI*

Lakshya loses to Nishimoto, bows out of Japan Masters

KUMAMOTO, 15 NOV

Star Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen saw his fine run snapped after a draining three-game semifinal defeat to Japan's world number 13 Kenta Nishimoto at the USD 475,000 Kumamoto Masters Japan here on Saturday.

Seventh seed Sen, who endured a lean patch before rediscovering form with a runner-up finish at the Hong Kong Open, lost 19-21 21-14 12-21 to sixth seed Nishimoto in a 77-minute battle.

Sen, the 2021 World Championship bronze medallist, came into the match with a 3-2 head-to-head lead but had lost their previous encounter at the Indonesia Masters earlier this year.

The Commonwealth Games champion recovered from an opening-game setback to force a decider but looked completely out of sorts in the third game. In a clash between two evenly-matched players, it was about staying consistent in the rallies and drawing out errors. Lakshya managed that early on, moving to an 8-3 lead, but Nishimoto seized the momentum by taking seven straight points for a 10-9 advantage. —*PTI*